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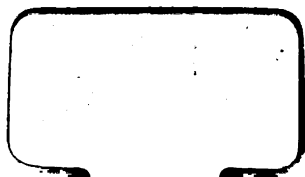
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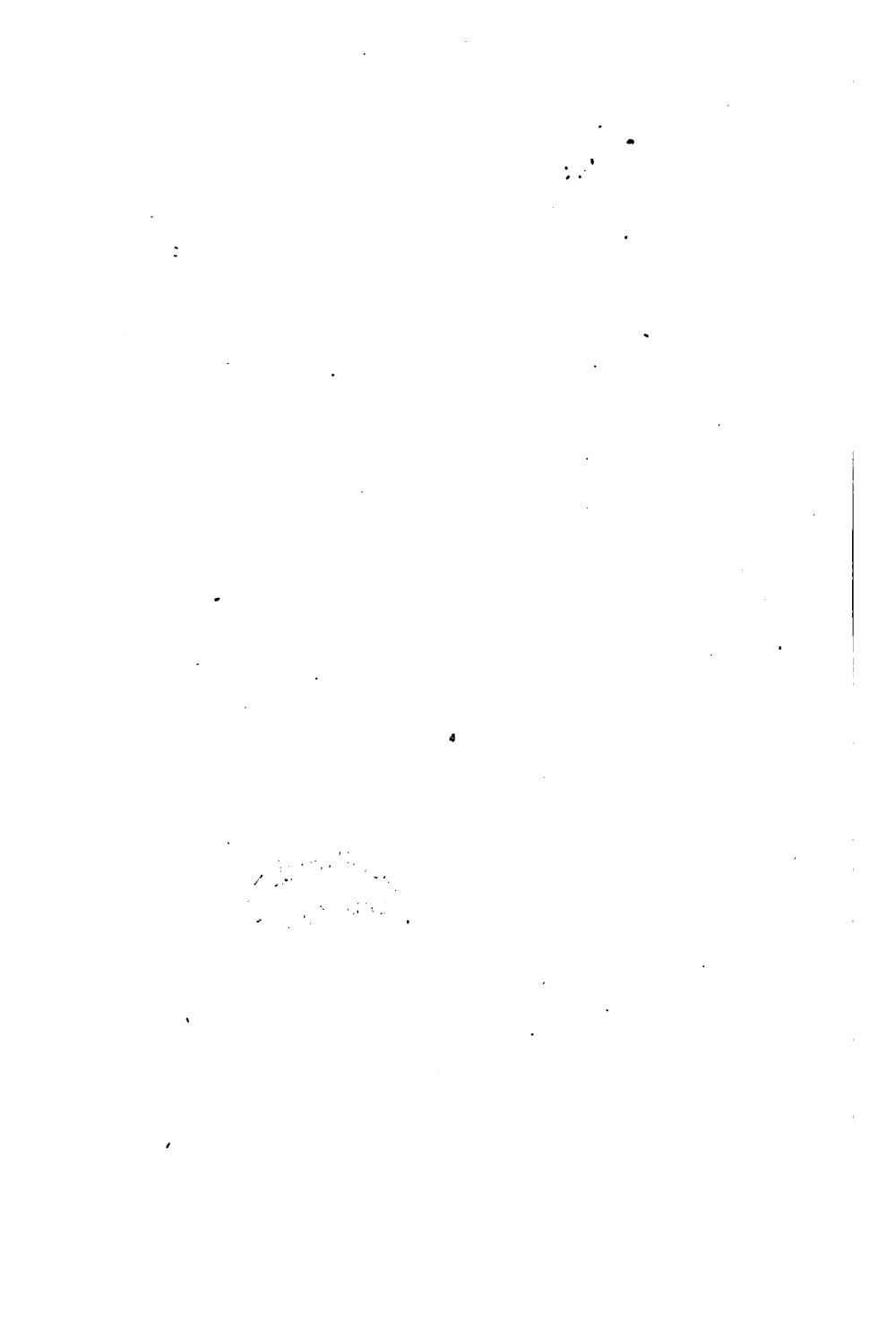
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A SAILOR'S SWEETHEART.

AN ACCOUNT OF
THE WRECK OF THE SAILING SHIP,
"WALDERSHARE,"
FROM THE NARRATIVE OF MR. WILLIAM LEE,
SECOND MATE.

BY
W. CLARK RUSSELL,
AUTHOR OF "THE WRECK OF THE GROSVENOR," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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A SAILOR'S SWEETHEART.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN FLANDERS.

WE took the trades in lat. 28° N., and bowled merrily along with the strong, steady breeze well on the quarter, our studding-sails expanded like the wings of a bird, the white trade-clouds sweeping across a windy blue sky, a young moon shining over us at night, and the constellations familiar to the eyes of all northern dwellers verging farther and farther towards the horizon astern. These trades are glorious winds, and give the sailor nothing to do in his watch below but lay in his bunk and listen to the buzz of the froth at the bows, and the humming of the canvas.

The captain spent much of his time in his cabin, and this gave me many opportunities of being with Nelly, and many a long hour did she and I spend together talking, as we leaned over the ship's side and watched the foam spattering past; so that these winds brought us the happiest days we had yet spent, and our hearts were as gay as love and health, and the glorious panorama of the swirling ship, and the leaping seas, and the sunshine stooping to the flying clouds by day, and the stars shining like drops of molten silver among the wool-white shapes which ran over them by night, could make us. Our trysting-place, when I was not officer of the watch, and when the skipper was out of sight, and when the night had fallen so as to hide us from the eyes of the men forward, was to leeward of the poop, just forward of the quarter-boat, where the shadow of it made a deeper gloom; and there very often little Thomas would join us, and talk about his wife and the brand-new furniture he had put into the lodgings for her, and the savings he had placed in the bank to her name.

It was pleasant to listen to the gentle voice of this thorough-bred sailor and genial-hearted little man when he talked of his courtship, and how she had at first refused him, and how he went another voyage and then proposed again, and was accepted; and how he had carried her to the West-end of London to choose a fine dress to be married in, and how, after all the fitting and trimming and trouble, it never arrived in time, and she had to be married in a plain dress, and how she had cried with vexation, and how he had turned to and cheered her up. She was a long way astern of him now, he would say; but the end of his tow-rope was in her hands: he knew the way home, and would get the scent by waiting a bit.

Indeed, he grew mightily fond of Nelly—much because she never seemed tired of listening to his yarns about his wife and asking questions about her—and he was with her as often as he could find an opportunity. He got to dress at last expressly for her and for nobody else, for Madam Espinosa laughed at him in her sleeve, and he knew it, and hated her for it, as

he had a right to do. He had as many suits of clothes in his chest as all hands put together could have mustered, and was every day appearing in something new. As for his waistcoats, I never saw the like of them for number and variety : they were mostly velvet, and of different colours, chiefly presents from his wife and her relations, and as he appeared in them one by one, so Nelly admired them, and with a sincerity that gave him great happiness.

However, there was a cloud on the little man that was daily growing gloomier, and it filled him with uneasiness. This was the captain's behaviour to him. Latterly, it had grown so marked, that I used to think the skipper's eccentricity had taken this form for a change, and that he was done with his spirits in order to convert Thomas into an illusion.

A few days after we had taken the trades the chief mate joined me on the poop, although it was his watch below, and said to me, "Lee, what on earth is the cause of Captain Flanders' manner? He was offensive enough, in a quiet way, before we

sighted the Yankee barque, but from the hour we left her astern his behaviour has grown *hideous*. At dinner to-day I happened to have my eyes on him—although, God knows, I was thinking of anything else—when he bellowed out to me to know why I stared at him; and then addressing himself to Mr. Black, he said, ‘Is it not extraordinary that my chief officer should go on watching me as though he had a pistol in his pocket, and was only waiting until I looked another way to let fly at my head?’ This, of course, made the Scotchman squint at me as though I really meant to assassinate the captain; though Madam Espinosa said, ‘A monkey may look at a king, mayn’t he, captain?’ with a stress upon *monkey*, and then giggled as if she would choke. If I am to be affronted in this way, as good as called a murderer to my face, insulted by one passenger and distrusted by another, I shall give up. I shall tell the captain I’m done. Does he think I sneaked on board through a scupper-hole? does he take me for a long-shoreman? Let him teach me something I don’t know, and his cook shall pull my nose.”

He was purple with rage, although he had begun quietly enough : his Welsh blood was like a kettle full of hot water ; a very little fire set it boiling. At the same time it was impossible to miss the bewilderment that lay under his passion ; indeed, he was not only puzzled to know what he had done to make the captain hate him, but he saw himself being gradually drawn into a muddle that was likely to end in doing him serious professional injury, and whilst he could not tell how on earth he was drifting into the danger, he could not see how to check his progress.

I had no consolation to offer him. My frankness at the beginning of the voyage had rather frightened me on reflection, and I did not like to say what I honestly believed, that the captain was growing madder every day. The mere fact that nobody seemed to notice this but Nelly and myself was a hint to me to be extremely cautious how I gave my conviction expression. Whatever the Espinosas might be, Mr. Black was no fool, slow and thick as he was ; and that he did not seem to notice the captain's

behaviour any more than Mr. Thomas was able to interpret it correctly, was proof to me that up to the present moment no significance was attached to it; in short, that if Mr. Black and the others took notice of his manner, they merely reckoned it as a little odd and that was all.

And why not? Whatever might have been whispered, there was not a man in the *Waldershare* who would have cared to sincerely admit that he believed her commander, who had absolute disposal of the ship and the lives of everybody in her, who was entirely beyond control, and could do as he pleased, was *mad*. So far he had navigated the vessel well; he had proved himself a capable seaman; the only distinct indication of his madness that he had yet given outside the hints on which I had grounded my distrust, was his behaviour at Lanyon's funeral; but the passengers had not witnessed this; I do not think a word was said about it to them, and I have already shown what effect it produced forward.

Therefore all I thought it advisable to

say to Mr. Thomas was to recommend him to exercise patience, and to believe that, as the captain's prejudice was entirely without foundation, it must pass. But he shook his head.

"No," said he, "it won't pass; and as to exercising patience, who the deuce can stand being *hazed* at table for raising one's eyes? That idiot Black avoided me just now in the cuddy. Can it be possible that Captain Flanders wants to raise a scare over the Yankee mutiny, and to imply that I—a gentleman, an officer in the British mercantile marine, with a captain's certificate in my desk at home—that *I* am capable of causing insubordination among a crew?"

In my own mind I thought the captain mad enough to believe this, and, indeed, as I had observed that his manner to Thomas had grown more pronounced since the Yankee adventure, and Thomas had also noticed the circumstance, the little man's suggestion, though offered in a spirit of the most contemptuous scepticism, struck me somewhat as a revelation. However, no more was said between us at that time,

and for some days Mr. Thomas made no further reference to the captain, nor did I gather that any exceptional conduct had given him new cause for complaint.

We lost the trades at $3^{\circ} 17'$ north of the line, having made the whole distance from Gravesend in twenty-seven days. This brought us to Wednesday, the 23rd of July.

We were now in the calm latitudes, the equatorial belt of baffling catpaws and glassy seas. At noon we were shadowless; the sun stood right over the mainmast, and all the horizon swam and quivered in a haze of heat; the ocean lay like a surface of quicksilver, along which the swell, breaking into long lines of golden fire under the sun, ran languidly, and the paint on the ship's side bubbled into blisters, and the pitch in the seams of the deck was as soft as wax before a fire, and stuck to the soles of one's boots, while the woodwork that lay exposed to the sun burnt the flesh of the hand that rested a moment upon it. The trade-wind failed us in the morning watch, and before noon we lay roasting in a dead calm. The cuddy was like an oven, and the wind-sail

did nothing for us, for there was no breeze to swell it; the awning gave some protection to the head, but even under it the deck was as hot as though there were flames beneath; the water was as transparent as glass, and by getting into the gig that was slung astern and looking down, one could see the rudder to the very bottom of it, and the copper quivering with a yellow sheen deep in the white transparency. The tar lay all moist upon the shrouds and backstays, and blackened the hand that touched them; the sails hung bleached to the whiteness of snow, and looked a hundred years old; the heat of the galley drove the cook into the shadow of the top-gallant forecastle, and the smoke of the chimney went straight up the foremast in a blue line; the pigs under the long-boat lay, with heaving bellies, on their sides, the hens in the coops squatted in a fluff of feathers with their beaks open, and wherever a shadow was cast upon the deck, there were men sitting with their feet bare, their shirts wide open, and their faces streaming with perspiration.

All that day not a catspaw darkened the water, not a brace was touched.

At last the sun went down, and we watched with relief the vast orb, throbbing red as blood, sink behind the clear unbroken line of the horizon, without a cloud to soften his crimson fires, whilst in the glassy surface of the water the reflection lay in a purple band, the lowermost point of which seemed to stretch within a hundred feet of the ship, though, as the orb gradually veered lower and lower, this magnificent stream of light upon the sea shortened away from us and ran flashing towards the horizon, as if, indeed, it were a tangible belt of gold which the sun was trailing across the bosom of the deep, and dragging away with it behind the world of waters, until the last fragment of the sun vanished, and with it its glowing reflection, and then there shot up out of the horizon into the red sky long spikes of dazzling dark-golden light, the extremities of which could be followed by the eye into the very zenith, whilst the reflection of these fiery lines in the sea was so clear and sharp that the

whole of the red west above and below the water-line was barred by a huge flaming wheel that faded quickly, until nothing of all this magnificence remained but a slight hectic upon a deep-blue ground, upon which the stars flashed as bright and round as little moons.

Some hands were called aft to furl the awning; they came along on their naked feet, and made no noise; we spoke almost in a whisper, for the darkness had followed the blaze in the west so quickly as to fill us with a kind of awe, and all upon the deep lay so great a hush that the mind by instinct caught the silence, as it were, by imitating it.

"Will," exclaimed Nelly, coming over to where I stood and speaking very softly, "come with me; I want to show you something."

I followed her to the side of the poop, where she had been standing looking into the water, whilst the men were furling the awning.

"What is it?" I asked.

"See there!" she said, pointing to the

water just under the quarter-boat, the shadow of which was noticeable.

I looked and saw an outline of blue light close against the surface, so faint that it was almost impossible to tell the shape of it; but on a sudden it began to move. The outline sparkled and took the form of a great fish of immensely solid and rounded proportions at the head, tapering away aft into a tail, the vibration of which was distinctly visible in the sheen of the phosphorus, as the ghostly, silent outline passed away towards the bows of the ship.

"What is it, Will?" asked Nelly in a frightened voice. "That is the second one that has passed in a few minutes."

"A shark, Nell. Look! yonder's another; there—a little this side the reflection of that large star."

"What dreadful creatures, and how quiet!"

Just then a fiddle began to scrape forward, and a man sang the first bar or two of a song; but the accompaniment was evidently not to his taste, for I heard a little wrangle, and presently the fiddle struck up

again ; but this time the singer accompanied himself, and twanged the fiddle-strings with his fingers instead of scraping them with the bow, so that the notes were much softer, or at all events harmonized better with the singer's voice, which was a very sweet, plaintive tenor. The singer was a Norwegian, and the song was one of the ballads of his country, I believe, though what it was about I am sure I don't know ; but the air was pretty, and the fellow sang it with taste and feeling ; his voice rang upon the night with a kind of moan in it like the notes of a flute, and whilst he sang the ship would now and again heave lazily, and set the lofty sails gently flapping, whilst the wash of the water alongside fell upon the ear like a sob.

The song was a long one—most sailors' songs are, for the verses are nothing to them ; they only care about the tune, and will repeat the same words over and over again—and Nelly and I, and indeed all hands, were listening to it with great interest, when the captain called me. He was standing near the skylight, and I went up to him.

"I can't stand that song, Mr. Lee; it irritates me. I never heard such a miauling. Go forward and stop it, but don't say you got your orders from me. It is never my wish to interfere with the men's harmless enjoyments. But stop *that* song and at once."

He turned hurriedly and walked aft to the wheel. I went along the main-deck and hailed the fore-castle in a quiet voice.

"Who's that singing?"

The singer immediately ceased.

"It's Petersen, sir," said one of the men.

"Why, Petersen," I sung out, "that's a very pretty song, my lad; but can't you give us something more lively? The ladies say it's too dark to listen to such a song as that."

Some of the men laughed.

"Billy," cried a voice, "give us 'Tommy's got a wooden leg;' that's a regular A 1 song, and sure to please the ladies."

Whereupon some one else proposed another song, and in a minute they were all calling out for different songs, all to please the ladies. However, I had put a stopper

on the Norwegian, and having accomplished my object I returned to the poop. When the captain caught sight of me he again called me to him. He had taken his stand close against the quarter-boat, well out of earshot of the wheel, and in the shadow of the mizzen-mast. Nelly and the other passengers were together on the opposite side of the deck, so that where the skipper stood was secluded enough. I noticed this, and that is why I have set it down ; for it struck me, from the posture he had assumed and the spot he had stationed himself in, that he had something important to say.

"Have you stopped the men's singing altogether?" he asked.

"I suspect I have made them coy, sir, by telling them that the ladies are listening," I replied, laughing.

"Where is Mr. Thomas?"

"In his cabin, I believe, or else on the quarter-deck. I have not seen him since he went below."

"You and he are pretty good friends, are you not?" said he in a soft way, and speaking almost in a whisper.

"Yes, sir; I like Mr. Thomas very well indeed," I answered, a good deal struck by the manner in which he asked his question.

"Does he ever talk to you about me, Mr. Lee?" he inquired blandly, and with a note of kindness in his voice.

"Why, yes, sometimes, sir," I answered, pausing a moment before I answered; for I had now made up my mind to keep the lead going, as I had no idea into what channel he might make me drift.

"Sometimes only, eh?—not very often, Mr. Lee? And pray, what is the nature of his talk—the general character of it? Think. How does he usually express himself about me?"

"Really, sir, I am unable to tax my memory to that extent. We have often talked together, and no doubt your name has been mentioned; but I cannot pretend to remember what was said by either of us."

He remained silent for some moments, and I heard him tapping the deck very softly with his foot.

"Have you ever noticed him talking to the men, Mr. Lee?" he asked presently.

"Never beyond giving them instructions, sir."

"I thought I saw him go forward about a quarter of an hour ago. Are you sure you did not notice him somewhere about when you went along the main-deck?" he asked sternly.

"Quite sure," I replied.

"For Heaven's sake!" he exclaimed in a low voice, broken with agitation, and glancing up and down the deck, "don't let your sympathy as a shipmate stand between that man and me. It is your *duty*, Mr. Lee, to answer my questions truthfully, and to aid me in immediately checking any influence that is likely to bring this ship into peril."

"I know what my duty is, sir, and I trust that you have already seen enough of my character to judge that I do not need any appeal of the kind you have thought fit to make to me to discharge my duty," I exclaimed, with a warmth I afterwards regretted, remembering that I was addressing a man who was not responsible for his words; "but if you mean to suggest that the chief

officer is likely to act in such a way as to bring this ship into peril, I can only solemnly assure you that you are greatly mistaken, and that your suspicions do an excellent seaman and an honourable man a very grievous injury."

He bent forward to look me close in the face, but not being sure of his intention, I drew back; on which he reared himself up and shook his head several times. Rather from the wish to serve Thomas by getting to know more of the captain's notions about him than from mere curiosity, I asked —

"May I inquire, sir, what Mr. Thomas has done to make you think him capable of acting treacherously?"

He held up his finger, but he never answered me. Whether he meant to convey some reply by the motion of his arm I do not know; but as the gesture was altogether without meaning it was not a little alarming, and I watched him closely, ready for his next move.

Suddenly putting his hand against his left side, he exclaimed, "Feel here, Mr. Lee."

I hesitated, for it seemed a sort of liberty to take; but he cried out with a sudden passion, "Feel, sir—feel here, as I order you."

I put my hand to his side and then drew away.

"What did you feel?" he inquired, in a low, trembling voice.

"Something very much like a revolver," I replied.

"Is it customary," said he, in a smooth voice, "for the commander of a ship like the *Waldershare* to carry loaded fire-arms about with him? You have been some years at sea—answer my question."

"I don't think it is, sir."

"Why, then, do I carry this revolver about with me all day and sleep with it under my pillow at night?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Captain Flanders."

"Because," he answered, breathing short and bending so close to me that his breath fell warm on my cheek, "I have been forewarned that my life will be attempted, and the name of the man has been given me."

I was so astonished and confounded by his earnestness, that I may as well honestly declare I believed, for the moment, he was speaking the truth.

"Do you really mean to say," I cried, "that there is some one aboard this ship who is waiting for an opportunity to——"

"Hush!" he whispered, and he broke into a low laugh, the first laugh I had heard come from his lips since we had left the docks. If ever madness spoke in a laugh it spoke here; the sound brought me to instantly, and I understood the dangerous delusion that possessed him.

"Keep what has passed between us a secret—mind! not a word!" he exclaimed. "But," he continued, lowering his tone into a whisper that I had to strain my ear to catch, "you may tell Mr. Thomas, if you like, that I am not only forewarned, but *forearmed*, Mr. Lee. Do you follow me?—*forearmed*. Say, if you like, that I made you put your hand upon it, that my heart beats under it, and that with a movement of my wrist I can command six lives!"

He walked away to the end of the poop,

and stood looking with his face over the stern.

What I had heard and discovered made me so restless and agitated that I scarcely knew what I was at. I paced about the forward end of the poop, watching the man's motionless figure with an anxiety so keen that I believed it to be an inspiration, and imagined that presently he would play us or himself some devilish trick. On one side of the poop were the passengers, a dark group, Madam Espinosa's laugh sounding often, while her husband cackled to Mr. Black, whose gutturals were as frequent as madam's silly laughs. A little to the right and beyond them stood the man at the wheel, with the haze of the binnacle falling upon him; and on the other side was the figure of Captain Flanders gazing and gazing astern without a move of his body, whilst the slow heave of the breathless sea made the stars lazily slide up and down past him. I thought if the group on the port side of the deck only knew what was in the mind of that silent form, the laugh and the cackle, and the guttural "echs!"

and "ehs!" would take another and a very different note.

Had we carried a ship's doctor I should have told him what had passed, and gone to work to secure the captain before he did any mischief. But as matters stood I felt altogether helpless. If I spoke to the passengers I should probably frighten them without doing any good*; even though I succeeded in making them believe me. If I went among the crew I could not be sure of their support. Suppose some of them should come aft and tell the captain I had called him mad, and had asked them to help me to secure him, and he, with the cunning I was bound to believe his madness must give him, should persuade them that I and Mr. Thomas were in a conspiracy to wrest the command of the ship out of his hands? He had only to order the chief mate and me into irons, and the thing would be done. There would then be no check upon him; he might navigate the ship anyhow; I should not be at hand to give Nelly any help if she needed it; and my own chances in life, in a professional

sense, would be ruined—that is, if the ship under his sole charge ever lived to arrive in port.

These thoughts hurried through my mind as I paced about the deck, and they will fairly serve to lay the helplessness of my position before you.

After standing for at least ten minutes looking over the stern, the captain crossed to the passengers and exchanged some sentences with them ; he then gave his arm to Nelly and walked to and fro the poop with her. The sky was a marvellous panorama of stars, covered with a brilliant dust from horizon to horizon, among which the stars of the first magnitude seemed to hang low, and dropped flakes of silver into the water. Down in the north-west there was a continuous glancing of sheet-lightning. The heavy dew cooled the atmosphere somewhat, but the men preferred the deck to the hot forecastle, faintly lighted by the smoky oil-lamp that flickered under a blackened beam, and lay in groups here and there, fanned by the foresail as it idly flapped to the roll of the ship. “Hillo!”

I exclaimed, "what's this?" as something clawed the hind part of my legs. It was the captain's dog, but not being in the mood for caresses of that kind, I gave him a gentle kick under the rail and drove him aft. Every roll of the vessel brought the dew down like rain out of the sails. Was there never to be any more wind in this part of the world? And I looked all round the horizon for any flaw or tremor among the star-flakes in the water. Presently, my sight going into the south-west, I thought I saw a light down there that looked but a yellow sickly star, if star it were. I kept my eyes on it, and the passengers being silent for a few moments, and the sails hanging motionless, I heard a kind of pulsing in the air, and understanding the meaning of the sound, I dived for the glass.

"There's a steamer's light right abeam of us, sir!" I sung out.

The captain stopped, with Nelly on his arm, looked, and then answered, "I see her, sir," and resumed his walk.

"Shall we show a light?" I called. "She appears to be heading right for us, sir."

"Ay, show a light at both ends of the ship," he answered, walking all the time and speaking as if I had no right to bother him.

A lantern was swung in the fore-rigging and another on the gaff-vang, so that the coming vessel might know the length of us, and how we lay. I believe she had not seen us before, but no sooner were our lights exposed, than she starboarded her helm to pass under our stern. Until she was close to we could not make out what sort of vessel she was, and then there loomed up within a few cables' length of our quarter a huge black man-of-war as big as an island, ship-rigged, with immensely long yards, a squab fat funnel just before the mainmast, and a bow as high as a cliff, curving out with a stem that subtended into the water at an angle like a beach. All was as still as death aboard of her; no smoke came from her funnel; the only light I could make out was a lantern as brilliant as a bull's-eye slung half-way up her foremast; all that could be heard was the splash of water from the discharge-pipes and the hollow throbbing

of her machinery, and the seething of foam as she tore up the sea with her stem. The stars went shooting through her rigging as she passed, like a constellation of fire-flies playing over her spars and among her shrouds. Lofty as was the *Waldershare*, I doubt if her royal-masthead reached half-way as high as the main-topmast of this war-ship. The gloom and the starlight probably magnified the proportions of the vessel in our eyes, but as she loomed past, the vast shape, urged by a power invisible and, but for the hollow vibrations of the engines, inaudible, with her hull blotting out the stars high above the horizon, and her mastheads soaring into the gloom beyond the reach of the sight, she looked the biggest vessel in the world, and the creation of a race of giants. What countryman she was, whence and where bound to, I don't know; she was steaming about eight knots, heading N.E. and by E., and she passed away into the darkness of the horizon like a phantom ship, not a sign of life aboard, and her engines sounding as though she breathed heavily as she went.

Captain Flanders, never letting go of Nelly, stopped walking a few moments to look at the big ship as she went by, and then started afresh. I began to think that my sweetheart must have had enough of walking by this time, and watched them. What was he telling her? that a spirit had warned him his life was in danger, and that he carried a loaded pistol in his pocket? He was mighty earnest—so much I could tell by the tone of his voice—and his hand incessantly sawed the air, and once or twice he stopped and pointed upwards, as though he were explaining the names of the stars to her. At last he made a long halt close to the quarter-boat, just where he had spoken to me, and there they stood for about five minutes; after which, and rather suddenly, Nelly walked away, advanced a few paces towards me, stopped with an air of irresolution, and finally went below.

I wondered what all this could signify. In a few minutes the steward rang his bell in the cuddy to announce that grog was on the table. The Espinosas and Mr. Black, however, stayed under deck but for a very

short while ; indeed, the cabin was as hot as an oven, and the smell of the warm varnish, coupled with the hundred indescribable odours which creep up out of the hold of a ship in sweltering weather, made the cuddy extremely unpleasant. Espinosa lighted a cigar almost as long as his arm, and getting a flag for a pillow, laid himself flat on the deck ; Mr. Black dozed over a large meerschaum ; and Madam Espinosa entertained herself with her own thoughts, occasionally asking questions in Spanish of her husband, who sometimes muttered *si, si*, and sometimes made no reply.

On a sudden I felt a little air, and glancing up found the main-topsail aback.

“ Hands aft to the braces ! ” I sung out.
“ Wheel there, how’s her head ? ”

“ East-half-north, sir.”

“ Man the port main-braces—put your helm aport—let go those starboard mizzen-topsail braces and shiver the sail, my lads.”

In a few moments the ship felt the light breeze, and was heading her course with the yards hard against the starboard rigging. The sound of the lip, lip, lipping of the

water alongside was delightful after the stagnation of the last twelve hours. The surface of the water was all blurred and darkened by the warm sweet wind, but the night was quite cloudless, and one looked in vain for any place for the wind to come from. Here was a breeze that might carry us across the equator into the south-east trades, and any way it was a slant to make the most of. The worst part of these latitudes, worse even than the intolerable heat, is the having to watch for every draught of air that flutters the dog-vane, and box the yards about to every shadow that creeps along the water in order to sneak across the Line. So I boarded the main-tack, triced out the bow-lines, set the crossjack and every fragment of fore and aft canvas until the ship was a great cloud of sail. The water was now full of fire alongside, and from under our counter the large bubbles sped away, buzzing merrily, every sail was drawing and silent, and the ship was as still as if she floated down a river.

I had thought the songs of the men would bring the captain on deck, but he

did not make his appearance. Presently the ropes were all coiled over their pins, and the men gone forward. Seeing a shadow thrown on to the quarter-deck, I looked over the poop-rail, and there stood Nelly.

"Is Captain Flanders up there?" she asked in a whisper. I said no, and she came up. "I have something to tell you, Will," said she, with an embarrassed air. "It is very absurd, and yet it has vexed me, too—more than it need do, you will say."

"What is it, Nelly?"

"You will scarcely believe it," she whispered, taking my hand, and keeping her head bent. "Captain Flanders has asked me to marry him."

"What! asked you to marry him?"

"Yes, dear," said she, controlling herself and speaking quietly. "He said I was the only woman he had ever met who appeared to understand his views on religion; and then he exclaimed, with his voice all of a tremble, 'Miss Maitland, will you be my wife?'"

"The devil take him! And what did you say?"

"For some moments I really didn't know *what* to say, Will. Knowing him to be crazy, I felt rather frightened. Then I thought to myself, 'If I answer him *too* plainly, he will suspect there is something between Will and me,' and I saw that I should act unwisely in doing or saying anything likely to arouse his jealousy. So I answered—but I don't really believe he heard all my answer, for I mumbled my words terribly; my heart beat so, Will!—that his proposal had taken me by surprise, and I said that, whatever my inclinations might be, I should have to consult my friends in England before I could give him an answer. And so I begged him not to refer to the subject until we arrived home."

"Poor wretch! that was a caulker, Nell," said I, laughing. "And has he promised?"

"Yes; I made him promise on his honour. I am horribly annoyed, Will. It is simply the result of my being too amiable—listening to his nonsense with a grave face when

Madam Espinosa would have burst out laughing. Yet I thought that was the right policy for your sake. I wanted to make a friend of him, but not a lover—oh dear, Will, not a lover.”

“What was he talking about before he asked you to marry him? He has been dragging you up and down the deck for nearly an hour.”

“Quite an hour, and my legs ache dreadfully.”

“I’ll fetch a chair——”

“No, dear, I prefer standing. I can run down these steps should he come out of his cabin, for he must not see us together now, Will—I mean, much together. Did you ask what he talked about? I scarcely know; it was chiefly about spirits, I believe; but I was thinking about other things at the time, and what little I had heard was put out of my head by the fright he gave me when he asked me to marry him.”

“Did he tell you that his life was in danger?”

“No. What do you mean? Is it?”

“No more than mine is, dear; but I have

discovered to-night enough to convince me that he is dangerously mad."

"Because he has asked me to marry him?" she exclaimed, laughing.

"I wish that were all; but ask no questions, Nell."

"What an adventure! what an adventure to tell Phœbe!" she said, with something in her voice betwixt a laugh and a sigh. "Yet who could help feeling sorry for him? When he talks rationally I could not imagine a better-bred man. The submissive manner in which he received my answer and gave me his promise was really touching. He released my arm instantly, and as I left him he bowed to me with great dignity and gentleness."

She took the womanly view of him, and I loved her all the better for her true-hearted sympathy. I was sorry enough for him too, God knows; for what is there under heaven more dreadful than the spectacle of a mind unhinged, with glancings of rationality which only serve to deepen and darken the contrast of the horrible disease that is hourly eating out of the soul the instincts and

elements of responsibility which give it its manliness and beauty? But I also thought of him as the captain of a large ship, with forty-five human beings committed to his discretion and judgment, every day bringing with it some new problem of navigation and seamanship that demanded a cool and healthy head for its solution; I thought, I say, of the tremendous responsibilities imposed upon him by his position as commander; and then I considered that he was mad and ought not to hold his post, but that I could see no way of procuring his removal without running 'a risk that might prove professionally fatal to me; so that these reflections deadened my sympathy greatly, and made me think of him with another mood than that in which Nelly spoke of him. As to his avowal to Nelly, her account of it had indeed annoyed me, as was perhaps natural. My first movement was one of resentment that he should have dared to offer marriage to my sweetheart; but so changeful or mingled are our passions, that his very avowal, when I came to consider it, made me more sorry for him than

I had been before, and witness his madness in a sadder light. This poor fellow had fallen in love with Nelly, not knowing that she was betrothed to me; and I found it a kind of unconscious flattery, and it touched me. His madness would make him feel a lonely man, and it shocked me to think how it must drive him further and further away from all sympathy with his sane and natural desire for love, and leave him finally an object of fear and compassion, and to tortures of mind beyond the reach of any healthy imagination to conceive.

After Nelly had left me I paced about the poop lost in thought, and scarcely noticed the departure of the passengers to their cabins, until, on looking about me, I found myself alone. The captain's dog lay on the deck near the wheel, and I stood stroking it with my foot for some moments, watching the reflection of a large star as the water ran over it in little spaces of foam, which glanced and vanished like the play of light upon silver threads. It was now hard upon eleven o'clock, which left me another hour's watch to stand; the breeze had slightly

freshened, the stars had a sharper light, and the bluish glint in their lustre made me hope this wind was likely to hold, and the surface of the water was now very dark, though the phosphorus sparkled brightly all around the ship, and the horizon was a clear black line against the sky.

I stood near the wheel watching the compass, anxious that the wind should come more free ; for, as it was, the ship with her spars all erect was looking up almost right into it ; half the main-royal was aback, and the crossjack bowline was hauled so taut that the bolt-rope made a sharp angle. The ship was jammed in the wind ; still she frothed a pretty wake, and kept the quiet sea slapping her on the weather bow ; and as I watched how swiftly the foam of some little wave breaking over against the quarter slipped away and was swallowed up in the gloom before its froth had seethed itself into dark water again, I thought the *Walder-share* must be a witch, and, with a hundred tons less of dead weight in her, the fastest thing afloat.

“Keep her full,” said I to the man who

steered ; "if she breaks off she must go. Let us cross the Line, anyhow ; such a day's calm as we have left astern is enough to last a man a whole voyage."

Just as I said this up came the skipper. He approached the binnacle, looked at it, then aloft, then around him, then peered at me as though he wondered who I was. I waited for him to address me, but he said nothing, and went to leeward and gazed at the passing water for a time, and then came back to the binnacle.

Presently he asked in a hollow voice what o'clock it was.

"Just upon six bells, sir." And at that moment the bell was struck.

He seemed like a man awakened from a sleep, all in a flurry, and stared about him in the queerest way. His dog, hearing his voice, came up and pawed him, standing on its hind legs with its fore paws upon his coat. He picked the dog up and carried it to windward, talking to it ; then all on a sudden he threw the poor brute overboard, crying out, "I shall follow you soon, Bodkin ! Good-bye, old friend. Poor Bodkin ! good-

bye!" and he wrung his hands, and dashed them with a wild gesture against his face, and shouted out, "Can you see him, Mr. Lee?"

I made him no answer, being much shocked, not only by the madness but by the cruelty of the action; but the fellow who was steering answered, "The sharks 'll have had him by this time: there are two of 'em following the ship;" and as if in confirmation of the man's remark, I heard, or fancied I heard, a faint, wild yelp far astern.

The captain walked right up to me and looked me for a moment or two in the face without speaking. Remembering what he carried in his breast-pocket, I held my two hands ready poised for the first suspicious movement.

"It is hard to part with old friends, Mr. Lee," he exclaimed in a broken voice. "I have had that dog five years, and he was very fond of me. He has gone first, and it's my turn next. Poor Bodkin!"

He looked over his shoulder at the sea, edging away from me until he reached the

companion, and still looking astern. "Good-bye, Bodkin! good-bye, old friend!" he exclaimed, waving his hand; and he went below slowly, pausing at each step of the ladder, and sighing heavily.

I pulled my cap off and wiped my forehead, for the perspiration was thick on my face. I had half a mind to call Mr. Thomas at once in order to confer with him, but I was afraid the skipper might be lurking in the cuddy and would hear me; I therefore abandoned that idea and resolved to wait until eight bells, when it would be my duty to arouse the chief mate.

I quitted the wheel in order that the man might have no excuse to comment upon what he had seen. I was never before so troubled in my mind in all my life. I felt it would be impossible for us to go on much longer in this way; something was bound to happen sooner or later to open the eyes of the passengers and crew to the captain's condition, and if a disaster occurred, should not I deserve great blame for not providing against it, by alarming the men and securing the captain? It could be said after-

wards, "This man knew the captain was mad, and owns now that he thought the ship in jeopardy in consequence of the captain's madness: but he never interfered; he let things take their course." Well, that would be true from one side of the question, but in reality it was more Mr. Thomas's place to provide for the ship's safety against the captain's madness. I was but second mate. Moreover, he had eyes as good as mine to see for himself whether Captain Flanders was mad or not; and his not choosing to think the captain mad was sure to make any resolution I might form to prove him mad doubly fatal to myself in the event of failure.

Eight bells were now struck, and I heard them forward thumping the scuttle and rousing the sleepers in the forecastle. I called Mr. Thomas, and returned to the poop to wait until he dressed himself. A hand out of the port watch came aft to take the wheel, and I heard the man whom he relieved tell him that the captain had thrown his dog overboard. The fresh man, however, did not appear to make much

of it; he was sleepy, hot, and irritable, and he growled out, "Ay, an' a good job too for the dog. He'd better be drowned than kep' at sea all his life." The truth was, the seaman who had witnessed the captain's action was unable to convey the impression it had left. All he could say was, that the skipper had flung his dog overboard, but he could not submit the scene to the other in such a way as to make him see the madness in it. He would tell the same story in the same way when he went forward, and probably all the men would think was that the skipper had a right to drown his dog if it pleased him; and there was nothing strange in his choosing to drown it at night, only he might as well have hitched something heavy round the poor brute's neck first. Whether they would make anything of the captain's threat to follow his dog I could not foresee; sailors mostly laugh at talk of that kind, and only remember what was said after a man has executed his threat.

Mr. Thomas yawned loudly as he came on deck; he said he had only had half an hour's

sleep during his watch below ; it was too hot to sleep, he said ; it was worse than lying in the Hooghley, only there were no mosquitoes. However, I soon woke him up.

In the first place I told him that the skipper had thrown his dog overboard, and his exclamation to me when he did so ; and then I told him about the offer of marriage to Nelly.

"There, now !" he exclaimed. "What did I tell you the other day ? You wouldn't believe me."

"Well, Mr. Thomas," said I, "you were right ; but if that were the worst part of my story I shouldn't have said anything about it. I believe that the time has come for us to make up our minds very seriously as to what course we are to adopt with regard to Captain Flanders. My conviction is that he is dangerously mad, and that the ship is in peril so long as he commands her."

I then gave him the whole substance of the captain's conversation with me, all that he had said about the chief mate, how he had made me feel the revolver in his breast, and how he had ordered me to tell Mr.

Thomas that he was prepared for him. The little man was thunderstruck. He kept on exclaiming, "Is it possible he can believe I want to murder him?" as though he could not master the meaning of his own words.

"What a frightful position to find oneself in!" he cried. "Good God! under the persuasion that I am thirsting for his blood he may take it into his head to draw his revolver upon me!"

"You will have to watch him very closely," said I. "I do, whenever he speaks to me."

"What shall we do, Lee?" he exclaimed. "It won't do to let him murder us."

"No, certainly not," I answered, "although his throwing his dog overboard looks uncommonly like business, sir. But what are we to do?" and here I enumerated all the difficulties I foresaw in the way of our confining him.

Thomas knew our profession thoroughly, and grasped all my objections at once. He shook his head as he muttered, "True, true, every word! Lord, what a position!" and

looked about the poop as if he expected to see the skipper lurking among the darker shadows.

"I see nothing for it," said I, "except to wait a bit in the hope that the crew and passengers will discover the truth for themselves. We *must* provide ourselves with witnesses able to prove that the man was mad enough to justify us in securing him before we lay——"

"Ay!" he interrupted eagerly; "but *you* can prove that he has as good as threatened to shoot me, that he carried a loaded pistol in his pocket, and that I went about in fear of my life!"

"I could swear to that, it is true," I replied; "but swearing and proving are two different things. Or view it thus. Suppose we resolve to confine Captain Flanders to his cabin, to secure him in such a way as to prevent him doing any mischief; it would not do for you and me to lay hands upon him—we should have to go to work in a formal way; we should require the assistance of the men. Suppose the men refused? But worse still—suppose they consented,

came aft, were harangued by the captain and persuaded by him that we were a couple of mutineers, and that this was the first step in a play that would end in transporting them all for life if they meddled any further in it, and then, having convinced them not only that he was not mad but that we were a couple of pirates, he ordered them to clap us in irons? Eh, Mr. Thomas! What think you of that picture, sir? Does it sound so very improbable? For my part, I believe that this is just the very identical thing that would happen if we went to work incautiously. Madness is always full of cunning, and I bet that if the skipper chose he could act and talk for hours together so rationally, so genially, with such a well-bred air—hear Miss Maitland speak of him!—that whoever listened should swear he was as fine and sensible a man as any living, and that you and I *must* be mutineers to entertain so atrocious a scheme as that of locking him up in his cabin!”

All this was as true as gospel, and Mr. Thomas was obliged to own it was.

“Why, in Heaven’s name, does he fasten

upon *me*?" he cried. "Do I look like an assassin? But he has been storing up his rage ever since we got under weigh. He has mortified me, he has affronted me, done everything he could to show how much he dislikes me, and now he means to make me out a murderer in heart if not in deed! A pretty mess, by George!"

"If he should fire at you, Mr. Thomas—"

"Fire at me!" he shouted. "For God's sake don't talk in that way, Mr. Lee! Fire at me! Why, if he should fire at me, do you know he might kill me, sir? How many balls do you think it takes to kill a man?"

"What I meant to say was, that if he should attempt any violence, we should have an excuse for locking him up."

"Oh, hang that kind of excuses; I'd rather be spared them," he growled. "Why, what a position for a man to be in—watched by a lunatic with a pocketful of powder and shot! At this rate, my life's not worth an hour's purchase. I'm no coward, Mr. Lee, and I shouldn't wait for a chair to stand on to pluck the tallest man living by the beard who called me a coward; but, by George!

it would have made Nelson himself sweat to feel that he was being watched by a madman with a revolver in his bosom, and that at any moment a shot might come crashing through his cranium."

"I don't think we need fear that," said I. "He is quite as much afraid of you as you can be of him; and with all deference, sir, I think your place will be to keep forward, at this end of the poop, as much as possible, and take care never to let him catch you looking at him, for that seems to have worried him more than anything else."

"I hope he won't come on deck this watch," said he. "However, you go below, Mr. Lee, and turn in. We can do no more good by talking, and if he should take it into his head to come up and have a look at me, he had best find me alone. A man can die but once, and if I am to be despatched by a madman's pistol, why, there's an end; it's forewritten, Lee. A bullet kills more quickly than drowning, and either death is better than hanging."

I never before realized how closely comedy

and tragedy lie side by side, until I caught myself laughing in my cabin over the image of little Thomas looking up and down the deck, starting at every sound, and shaping every shadow into the figure of Captain Flanders, in the act of levelling his revolver. However, laugh as I might, the matter was anything but a joke, and must be ended somehow and immediately, for it would be impossible for the chief mate to go on living in a constant state of fear; and even as it was, the four hours he would have to pass on deck before I relieved him, the night so dark that it was only because the sails blotted out the stars that their outlines were visible, no one at hand but the man at the wheel to come to his help, whilst at any moment he might turn and find the captain at his elbow; I say, even this middle watch that he was now keeping was full enough of anxiety to turn a man's hair grey. However, if the captain meant to shoot him, my being on deck would not stop the ball from hitting him; and so, after lying awake for an hour, listening to the froth spitting and hissing under the open port-hole, and

the tread of the mate's boots as he passed along the deck over my head, I fell asleep.

I had slept for an hour and a half, when I was awaked by the sound of water splashing in the cabin, and starting up, I found that the freshening breeze was now and again hoisting a little sea clean into the port-hole, and after filling a pair of half-Wellington boots, had washed them off the chest and carried them away to leeward. I jumped out of my bunk and closed the port, and having poured the water out of my boots, was about to turn in, when I heard the captain hail the forecastle, just over my head. I listened. Presently one or two men came along to the quarter-deck. The captain again sung out, and the men went up the poop-ladder and walked right aft.

I thought it strange that the captain should be at the break of the poop giving orders, if the mate was on deck, and wondered if Mr. Thomas had gone forward, and if so, what errand had carried him there. I put my eye to the port-hole to see to what extent the wind had freshened, and how the weather looked; but it was very dark

outside, and I could only make out here and there a star shooting past the thick glass as the vessel rolled.

I once more lay down and closed my eyes, and was dozing with all my senses abroad, when again I was aroused by hearing voices on the quarter-deck, and soon after Mr. Thomas's cabin door was opened and closed, and the key turned and withdrawn. As his cabin was right opposite mine, these sounds were very distinct. I knew I could not be mistaken; I never remember Mr. Thomas locking his cabin door before, and the withdrawal of the key was remarkable. I lay listening and wondering. Presently somebody rapped on the door of my cabin.

"Who's there?" I called.

"Are you awake, Mr. Lee, sir?" responded some one, in a voice that was intended for a whisper, but that sounded uncommonly like the snore of a lion.

"Is that you, Sinnet?"

"Yes, sir. May I open the door? Here's a regular start outside."

"Come in," I answered, sitting erect in

the bunk and groping about for a box of matches on a shelf over my head, which I presently found, and lighted the swinging lamp against the bulkhead. By the time I had got the lamp alight Sinnet had closed the door and stood up against it, with his big whiskers, red face, loose duck trousers, and naked chest, looking like a nautical sign over a public-house.

"What is it?" said I, staring at him as he turned his quid and squinted around the deck for some place to spit on.

"Why, sir," he replied, "the capt'n's just called me aft to lock Mr. Thomas up in his cabin. When I gets upon the poop, there stan's the capt'n holding a revolver in his hand, and he points like fury aft to where Mr. Thomas wur stan'ing, close agin the wheel, an' he sings out, 'The chief mate of this ship wants to take my life, bo'sun. D'ye see him there? Secure him at once and lock him up in his cabin, an' if he struggles, make his legs fast, d'ye hear?' And then he makes a little run aft and points his pistol as if he meant to shoot; arter which he heaves to and says to me,

‘What are you a-waitin’ for? Bear a hand! bear a hand!’ and he actively catches hold o’ my arm, sir—ay, as true as I’m stan’in’ here, he do—and he runs me up to Mr. Thomas and then up helm, and away he scuds forrards as far as the quarter-boat, singing out, ‘Quick! quick! I’ll teach him who’s master here! I’ll let him see what mutineering’s like!’ ”

By this time I was out of bed dressing myself, but so great was my excitement that I hauled on my trousers stern foremost, which, giving my legs no play, tumbled me down on the deck; nor could I rise until the boatswain had rid me of my small-clothes. I cursed my stupidity, for I had sprained my ankle. “But fire away, Sinnet. What happened after?”

“Why, sir, I went up to Mr. Thomas and says, ‘You hear what the capt’n says, sir?’ and he answers, ‘Thank God! Carry me anywhers out o’ reach o’ that blasted revolver;’ an’ he made me go along with him to leeward, all the way holding up his hand and crouching his head behind it, like; and he’s now in his cabin, and here’s the key of it.”

"Who's keeping watch?"

"Why, the capt'n, sir."

"Is he very much excited?"

"Not in the least now, sir. When I reported the chief mate in his cabin, he said quite pleasantly, 'Thank ye, bo'sun; that's a load off my mind.' But by the way the chief mate went along wi' me, I can't help thinkin', sir, it's more a load off *his* mind than t'other's. I can't make out how it's all come about, Mr. Lee. I never see any man less wicious-looking than Mr. Thomas. I've always found him straight, and right up to his work, and the men in his watch swear by him. Of course it's my dooty to do what I'm told, but sure-ly Captain Flanders is mistaken in Mr. Thomas—least-ways, it's all keel up'ards to me. However, there he is, sir," said the worthy fellow, pointing with his thumb over his shoulder, "an' I thought it right to let you know what's happened."

Something in the expression of his face induced me to exclaim, "I see you have guessed the truth, Sinnet, or at all events you are very near it. It's a bad job, but

I've known it for a good while, and have only wondered where the deuce all your eyes were not to have seen it sooner. I should have thought Lanyon's funeral would set the men wondering."

"Ay, sir, but it was queerer than we found it. Lookin' back, I can see it *was* a rummy business, but there was nary man forrards as could swear it wasn't all ship-shape, unless it wur Chips, and he's but a ignorant man too, though he pretends to know more than most men."

"Have you seen Miller since he left the wheel?" I asked, Miller being the man who was at the wheel when the captain threw his dog overboard.

"No, sir; but at eight bells when he came forrard he stood agin my door telling his yarn about the drownin' of the dog to one of the men—Jim Cooper I think the man was. I heard every word."

"Surely, bo'sun, that yarn ought to have prepared you for anything that might happen; I mean that, having heard that story, you couldn't feel much astonished when you found the captain on the poop with a

revolver in his hand, singing out to you to seize Mr. Thomas ? ”

“ Well, you see, it's like this, Mr. Lee,” he answered. “ If the captain hadn't sung out to his dog that he was going to follow him soon, I don't know as I *should* have found anything werry striking in Miller's story. But when I heard Miller say that the capt'n talked to the dog arter it was in the water, I begun to see something fishy in the whole job.”

The skipper's boots creaking overhead warned me not to prolong the conversation. “ Sinnet,” said I, “ you had better say nothing to the men about the captain's being—— ” I did not like to say *mad*, so I touched my forehead, and the boatswain nodded about thirty times, so anxious was he to let me see he understood me. “ We must take an opportunity to talk the matter over, and think what is best to be done. One thing is clear—he must be watched. Don't suppose I think him worse than he is ; but after what I have seen and heard, Sinnet, I believe that, if we value our lives, and desire to see the *Waldershare* kept out of

peril, we must watch him. He has confined the chief mate to his cabin, and so I suppose he means to keep watch and watch with me. We must let him think that he is keeping watch, but in reality, bo'sun, it will be for you and me to keep watch and watch. Do you follow me? You're not to come aft and walk the deck when I'm below, but you'll have to turn out and dress yourself, and keep your eye on the weather, and see all clear, and be ready to take the command out of his hands if you find him going wrong."

"I see, sir. He'll never guess that I'm keeping his look-out."

"Just so. You had better go forward now. I should not like him to find us talking here in my cabin. One delusion breeds another, Sinnet, and he may be ordering me under arrest next, which mustn't happen; for if I'm stowed away, who the deuce is going to check his navigation? But mind you don't get talking to the men. If they speak to you about Mr. Thomas, just say that it's your duty to obey orders and to ask no questions, and that you have no notion

what the rights or wrongs of the matter are; let the crew think what they like. The truth will come upon them soon enough, I believe, and you and I must take care that when it comes it shan't hurt anybody. That'll do, Sinnet. You can go forward; but keep a bright look-out until I go on deck to relieve the captain."

I was now dressed and sitting up in my bunk, with my legs dangling over the edge. Sleep was gone out of my eyes. I was greatly worried and anxious, although my mind was much relieved by the boatswain having found out the truth without any hints from me, and by the arrangement I had made with him.

My reason in ordering the boatswain not to speak to the men was, I wanted the crew to see for themselves that the captain was mad; they would then be all at my back. I could do as I pleased without fear of consequences, and it would be my duty to secure the skipper and release Mr. Thomas, that he might take command of the ship. But I was determined not to move in the matter until the crew came into my way of

thinking, and asked me to act; and how long it would take them to find out the truth was more than I should have cared to predict, for of what value was the penetration of men who, taking the boatswain as their mouthpiece, found that the only odd feature in the incident of the drowned dog was the captain talking to him "arter he was in the water"?

Dropping from my bunk presently, I opened the cabin door and looked into the cuddy. A single dim lamp was slung just abaft the mizzen-mast, and all the fore part where I stood was in shadow. Out on the quarter-deck it looked pitch dark. I heard the captain pacing the deck from the quarter-boat to the wheel and back again, with the regular swing of a pendulum. The bulkheads and timbers creaked a bit as the vessel rolled, but the water was smooth, there was a fine breeze, the ship, under a cloud of canvas, was going through it steadily and silently enough, as if her progress were made on the soft bed of froth she heaped around her. I crossed the deck and knocked lightly on Thomas's door. He had probably

been expecting me ; any way, he knew who it was, for he replied, " All right, Lee," and then came to the door.

" The bo'sun has told me all about it," said I. " I don't think you need worry yourself, Mr. Thomas. It can't last. There will be a regular flare-up of some kind or other, and then the crew will take the matter in hand."

" What does the bo'sun think, Lee ? "

" Why, sir, he thinks the captain mad."

" Good. I don't regret this. The thought of that man watching me with a pistol in his bosom was growing unbearable. Anyhow, I'm safe here ; only, for God's sake, keep a smart look-out and see that he don't run away with the ship. If a ghost should tell him to wreck the *Waldershare*, he might plump us into Saint Paul."

I explained the arrangement I had made with the boatswain.

" Ay," he exclaimed, " that will do. I shall be able to sleep now. It was too awful to think of this ship and nobody keeping watch but a madman. I say ! "

" What, sir ? "

"Take care that he don't starve me. He may try to come the bread-and-water dodge. I'm not a giant, Lee, but I want nourishing as much as any man. I commit my body to your love, Lee; for God's sake, my dear, see that I'm used well."

"I'll take care of you if I have to plunder the pantry," I answered. "Good night!" And I returned to my cabin, glad to have found him so easy under restraint. After sitting thinking awhile in my bunk, I put my head upon the pillow and fell asleep, and never awoke until I heard some one beating on my door. "Hillo!" I sung out.

"It's eight bells, Mr. Lee; your watch on deck, sir!" exclaimed the captain in his deep voice. Being dressed, I was on deck in a few moments, and as I made my way up the poop-ladder, I resolved not to appear to know what had happened in the watch just ended. The dawn was broad in the east, just frosting the wave-tips under it, though the horizon made a line as black as ink, and all in the west the night-shadow was dense, and the stars few and faint. The wind was fresh and sweeping, very

steady but well forward ; there was little or no sea, only now and again the lift of a swell, and a leap of dark water against our weather beam ; the ship was under the same canvas I had left on her, and was *swooshing* pleasantly through it, her spars erect like the cocked ears of a race-horse, and her decks all breezy with the wind.

The skipper was looking at the compass when I gained the poop, but on catching sight of me he came forward. His face, pallid at all times, looked uncommonly ghastly in the growing light, and his eyes appeared to have sunk a foot in his head since I had seen him last.

"I dare say you are surprised not to see the chief mate on deck, aren't you ?" said he, gazing at me very narrowly and with a great frown. I pretended to be struck by the circumstance, and looked around me, exclaiming, "I don't see him, sir."

"No, sir, and you'll see him no more," said he, with so serious and impressive a voice, that had I not known what *had* become of Thomas I should have thought he was dead.

"I explained to you last evening, Mr. Lee," he continued, "what the intentions of that man were. My life is precious to me, and it was monstrous that I, the captain of the *Waldershare*, should be haunted day and night by the conviction that my chief officer only waited for a fitting opportunity to murder me. No one," he exclaimed, in a trembling voice, "would believe the agony of mind this man has caused me. Over and over again when I have been lying awake he has crept into my cabin and looked at me, and seeing my eyes wide open has crept away again, whilst I have been powerless to move until he was gone; and then I have started up with the sweat pouring from my face, wondering with awe and devotion that Almighty God should always be pleased to keep me waking during the visits of this miscreant."

He lifted his hat with a shaking hand, evidently with the intention of wiping his forehead, but forgot his purpose and replaced his hat, and I saw two tears roll down his hollow cheeks. He gave me the idea of a man who had grown old and white and

imbecile in a night. I never beheld a more moving figure, nor could imagine a more affecting expression of face.

"May I ask what has become of the chief mate, sir?"

"He is locked up in his cabin, and there," he suddenly burst forth in a furious manner, "I intend he shall remain until I get him to Callao. It will be *my* turn then!" I held my peace. "You see how it is, Mr. Lee: to prevent him taking my life, I have locked him up in his cabin. Now I shall hope to get some rest, and be rid of this thing that frets my chest as though it were the blade of a knife boring me," laying his hand on the pistol under his coat. "You and I will stand the watches for the rest of the voyage out."

"Very good, sir."

"The course is S.S.W. She is a point and a half off—let her go full."

"Ay, ay, sir."

He then went away to his cabin. As I paced the deck I felt a real culprit. His tears and the glimpse he had enabled me to catch of his mental sufferings appealed to

me forcibly. I felt the strength of his claim upon me for protection against himself; and yet I durst not act. A sort of divinity hedges the captain of a ship at sea, as we are told it does a king ashore. Ay, you may laugh, my fine fellow, but let me tell you that in the eyes of a true sailor his captain has a kind of sanctity; he is boss, head man; one part of the deck is reserved for him; he comes and goes as he pleases; exacts absolute obedience, and over his little kingdom has more despotic powers vested in him than any other kind of monarch dare exercise or dreams of possessing. Hence every professional instinct in me shrank when I thought of seizing Captain Flanders and locking him up, even whilst I felt that by doing so I should be acting as much for his own as for the sake of every person aboard; and this reluctance was altogether independent of the reasons I have already given which determined me to remain inactive a while.

The sun brought promise of a fine day; it soared into a sky full of high delicate clouds, shot with vari-coloured lustre like the

pearly inside of an oyster-shell ; the sea was all ablaze in his light, and now and again a squadron of flying-fish darted from the side of a sea and buried themselves in some distant green ridge, like a flight of silver arrows shot out of the deep and falling back again. Presently signs of life began to show about the ship ; the cook came out of the fore-castle, yawning with his arms stretched out, opened the galley door and lighted the fire ; then the steward emerged from the cuddy and went forward ; then the butcher made his appearance and busied himself under the long-boat. Anon the boatswain's mate piped the watch to wash down the decks, and out from all sorts of places emerged a number of sleepy, grumbling men, their trousers tucked above their knees, and their arms bare ; the head pump was rigged, buckets and scrubbing-brushes passed along, and soon the lee scuppers were discharging dirty streams of water as the buckets were whisked along the decks and the scrubbing-brushes went scraping over the hard planks.

Whilst this work was doing, I noticed the boatswain, who was standing near the galley,

look intently aft, and suddenly his mate, who plied the buckets which were passed to him from forward, broke off for a moment to speak to him, and they both looked aft. I thought nothing of this, and took a turn; but when I returned I found most of the men looking in the direction in which the boatswain had fixed his eyes. When they saw me they fell to again, and the boatswain came and stood under the poop.

"I should like to say a word to you, sir," said he.

"Step up, Sinnet: what is it?"

"Why, sir, as I was looking this way just now, I see the skipper come to the cuddy window with a regular run, as if some one was arter him, an' shake his fist at us, and then he ran back; presently up he comes agin, and this time he makes a terribly ugly face, to be sure, and likewise holds his fist up, just as if some one was *sarcing* him and he was sayin', 'If ye do that again I'll knock you down!' Then back he flies, and I thought he was gone for good; but not he! He comes once more and flattens his face agin the window and stares like that, and

then he goes away. See, sir ! look at them fellows staring ! I'll bet my life he's there agin, watchin' 'em."

Indeed, the men were all looking towards the cuddy and speaking, one to another, in low voices. Telling Sinnet to remain where he was, I went on to the quarter-deck. The poop, as most people who have any knowledge at all of ships are aware, is a raised after-deck, the front of which overlooks the main-deck. The front of the *Waldershare's* poop consisted of three windows, on either side a central door ; these windows furnished light to the fore part of the cuddy, or saloon as it is sometimes called, the skylights illumining the part abaft the mizzen-mast. The break of the poop overhung these windows by about five feet, and as Mr. Thomas's cabin and mine projected to that extent beyond the line of the other cabins, a recess was left between them that was very useful in dirty weather as a well-sheltered nook for a yarn or a smoke.

The first object my eye encountered when I reached the quarter-deck was the face of

Captain Flanders framed by the window next to my cabin. It was as white as a sheet, and as he wore no hat, his egg-shaped head presented a most extraordinary appearance, nothing of him being visible below his chin. It was, indeed, a face to scare any man who did not know the condition of the brains inside it, and I was not at all surprised that the men could do no work for watching it. The moment he saw me his features grew convulsed, with an expression that was as much like a laugh as a frown; he raised his hand and beckoned to me with a gesture full of wild eagerness. I immediately entered the cuddy.

"Hush!" he exclaimed, putting his finger to his lips. "Come aft."

He led me to the door of his cabin, and I thought he would take me into it; but he stopped short.

"Why do all the men stare?" he asked. "What do they mean? Is the chief mate among them?"

"No, sir. The chief mate is in his cabin, locked up."

"Why do they stare, then?" he exclaimed,

angrily. "What are their intentions? Have they mutinied?"

"No, sir."

"I don't trust them. Have they no design upon my life? Will you swear?"

"I will swear with pleasure. Your life is as safe as mine, so far as they are concerned."

"How can you believe it?" he cried, scornfully. "Do you not see the devilish expression in their faces? Oh, my God!" he exclaimed, cowering and holding his hands to his head, "where can I go to be safe? Who will keep them out of the cuddy if they determine to enter it?"

"I'll take care that they don't come here," I answered; and I opened his cabin door, and he sneaked in, trembling all over; and the moment I closed it outside he locked it inside.

I hoped now he would go to bed and keep quiet. I doubt if he had shut his eyes in sleep that night, for he was on deck during the first watch, had kept much of the middle watch himself, and now, in the morning watch, he was still awake. The

men looked very hard at me as I came out of the cuddy; they all of them knew by this time that something was amiss with the captain, and, indeed, there seemed a disposition to skulk and yarn: the captain had gone wrong and the chief mate was locked up, and they fancied some advantages should come to them out of these things. But Sinnet was the man to "work up their old iron" without bullying them. The moment he noticed their laxity, he was among them, shoving one fellow this way, tumbling another yonder, grasping a bucket of water and swooshing it along so that it ran up the legs of the men who stood near and set them capering, wresting a scrubbing-brush from one man and scrubbing furiously to show how it ought to be done, running another forward by the scruff of his neck to show him where some dirt lay, shouting out in his hurricane-note, "Scrub and hang yourselves, bullies! Now then, you sogers* forward there, keep that pump working—d'ye hear? are you afraid of the sea running

* Soldiers. The most contemptuous term you can apply to a sailor.

short!" until the whole watch were in motion again and the scuppers gushing briskly.

I drew him aside when he had got the men to work and told him that the captain was afraid the men would rise, and that he was under the impression that Mr. Thomas was among them. "He is getting worse and worse," I exclaimed. "I wish I knew what my duty was in a job of this kind; for to go on in this way is ruinous to a man's nerves."

"D'ye think there's any foundation for the capt'n's suspicion of the chief officer, Mr. Lee?" asked the boatswain.

"Lord love you, man, no! Why, are *you* going mad to ask such questions?"

"Then he ought to be let out—that's why I axed the question, sir."

"No; you can't let him out without the captain's orders."

"Any way, here's the key of the chief mate's door; perhaps you'll take it, sir. It's of no use to me."

I put the key in my pocket and said it would be best to let the day pass without

doing anything, to see what was going to happen. "If he's much on deck the men will notice him, and as their suspicion is already excited, I dare say they will watch him pretty curiously. Towards the close of the day you may go among them and endeavour to find out their views. If they are agreed that he is mad—and there never was a madder man in this world, Sinnet, that you may take my word for—then you had better call a council, point out that the ship can't be left in charge of a lunatic——"

"Of a what, sir?" asked the boatswain, following me attentively.

"Of a madman, I say. Tell them, that as he has locked up one mate, he may take a fancy to lock up the other, in which case nobody would know where he was navigating the ship to, nor be able to form any idea of what he meant to do with her; so that the only way to end the trouble would be for some of the oldest seamen out of each watch to lay aft, headed by you, and request me in the name of the ship's company to take measures to provide for the vessel's

security. This would strengthen my hands and enable me to go to work without fear of the consequences, should the captain grow well and get me among the lawyers ashore. The liberty of a shipmaster is a delicate thing for his mate to meddle with, and unless I'm supported by the whole of the crew I'll not move in the business."

"I see exactly what you mean, sir, and it's the proper thing to do," answered the boatswain. "I know how to talk to the men to find out their minds; and I rather fancy old Sam Roband has been in a like quandary, for I heerd him once yarning to some of the men about a skipper as he sailed with that went cranky, and took the ship's cook to be his mother, and never would give no orders without fust singing out for his mother to lay aft and tell him if he was doing right."

The decks having been washed down and swabbed, were soon dry, the wind blew warm and fresh, and having veered a trifle to the westwards, had let the ship come to her course again, and so we might hope to

cross the Line next day. The ship being jammed in the wind, was not doing more than five knots, though the same wind free would have driven her nine or ten. The sea was all a-tumble with the breeze, and yet smooth—that is, we went along it smoothly, the waves not being strong enough to lift and drop us; and the water was of an exquisite transparent green, with heads of froth glancing and vanishing on it, and in the east it was of a brilliant tremble, too dazzling to look at, with the shining of the sun upon it; it was a morning to make the mere feeling of being alive a delight. Not only was the air like a powerful cordial, but it was impossible to look abroad upon the sea and at the ship, with her delicate topmost canvas matching the high pearl-coloured morning clouds, and her masts shining and her shrouds throwing bars of shadow upon the sand-white deck, and the foot-cloths of the lower sails, without a kind of transport. It was well for me to feel this sudden glow of pleasure, for undoubtedly I had passed a night of real anxiety, and still wanted all the heart I

could get. The ship was indeed, as things stood, in no immediate peril; but it was difficult to know what was going to happen whilst the captain remained at large. It was all very well for the boatswain to say that he knew how to talk to the men so as to get them to come aft to me about the captain; but I believed that when they came to discuss his conduct they would not be able to satisfy themselves that he was so bad as the boatswain might endeavour to make out. In short, my whole fear was that the crew would not be brought to think the skipper dangerously mad until he had done something to satisfy them that he *was* mad, and, as I have before written, what he should do to convince the men that he was a lunatic might cause the loss of the ship. How could this happen, do you ask? Well, there were several ways; but the one I most dreaded was his ordering me into arrest, his persuading the ship's company that Mr. Thomas and I were both in a conspiracy against him, his taking sole command of the ship and nobody knowing where he was steering her.

A little after seven o'clock Mr. Black came on deck and went forward to get a bath, which he obtained by giving one of the boys a trifle to pump on him. Next to jumping overboard there is no better bath to be had at sea than this, in warm weather. The water comes up cool and green and sparkling from under the bows, and the warm wind blowing under the jibs and stay-sail dries you without help of a towel. After his bath the Scotchman arrived on the poop for a little exercise. My mind being full of Captain Flanders, I resolved, when I saw Mr. Black come along the deck, to see what sort of a notion he had formed of the skipper.

"Good morning, Mr. Black; I hope you enjoyed your bath, sir?"

"Axcellent, axcellent, thank you, Mr. Lee. There's nothing moor refrashing than salt water befor brockfast; it clears the skeen of all the humours which gather during the night, and creates a soort of vacuum in the stomach that is vary conducive to good speerits when you know there's a hearty meal waiting you."

"Have you seen Captain Flanders this morning, Mr. Black?"

"No, sir, I haven't."

"I suppose you know that Mr. Thomas is under arrest in his cabin?"

"Eh? What's that?" said he, staring in his slow way.

I repeated my remark, and added that the chief mate was suspected by the captain of wishing to murder him. I put the case bluntly for reasons of my own, and watched the effect of my words. It took Mr. Black some moments to comprehend what I said, and then he turned pale. I was nearly laughing in his face, for as his pallor indicated the moment when he mastered my meaning, the time occupied by his mind in digesting my words was ludicrously apparent.

"Surely, Mr. Lee, that's a vary serious accusation to make against a man," said he.

"I can't imagine a worse one, Mr. Black," I answered. "But you know Mr. Thomas as well as I do, and I should like to ask if you think he's capable of so atrocious a crime as murder?"

"Why, sir," says he after a long pause, "a quastion of that kind requires mature conseederation befoor it's answered. In the mean time I cannot but say, that whether Mr. Thomas is capable of murdering anybody or not, I'm glad to hear that he's under arrest."

"But, my dear sir, if Mr. Thomas is innocent of any such intention is it not very hard upon him that he should be locked up in his cabin?"

"Well, sir, Captain Flanders probably knows what he's aboot; and having regard to the safety of his passengers and the sheep that he commands, I think he has acted judeeciously in confining Mr. Thomas on suspicion of a crime which, should it happen, might imperil all our lives."

I was staggered by the obtuseness of the man, for I honestly believed that he had witnessed enough eccentricity in the captain to justify him in putting something approaching a right construction on the arrest of the chief mate. However, it made me see how wise I was in not attempting to deal with the skipper on my own responsibility.

Mr. Black's alarm increased by degrees. I don't think, even when he turned pale, that he had fully mastered the formidable reason I had assigned for Mr. Thomas's confinement.

"Can it be possible," he exclaimed, "that Mr. Thomas wishes to murder the captain? Why, if that's so, it's the captain's duty to mak' for the nearest poort. I could not have believed such a thing. Ma certes! Murder the captain! What will the crew think?" and he asked me at what hour the mate's intentions were first discovered, and what was the motive, and how he proposed to execute his dreadful threat, and if it was known that others were concerned, and, in short, the fool treated the whole thing as if it had been a stark, fearful reality.

Seeing how deplorably literal he was, I resolved to give him no hint of the skipper's insanity, for I believed him just the man to go below and repeat my conversation to Captain Flanders, and then no doubt what I dreaded would come to pass—I should be locked up too. At last he cried out that he

must go and see the captain on the subject at once; the idea of there being anybody aboard capable of so bloodthirsty an intention as that of killing the captain made him feel terribly uncomfortable, and down he went.

However, when I came to reflect a bit, I considered after all that the man showed no extraordinary degree of stupidity in not having detected the captain's insanity; the pranks which had carried most significance to my mind had been exhibited almost exclusively before me and Nelly. To enable Mr. Black to form a decided opinion he should have attended Lanyon's burial, witnessed the skipper throw his dog overboard, listened to his conversation with me about Mr. Thomas, have heard him talk about religion and spirits, etc. Still I could not help thinking there had been enough manifestations of insanity in the captain's behaviour to have aroused Mr. Black's and the other passengers' suspicions, and the Scotchman's ignorance of the captain being wrong in his mind only convinced me that it is possible to live for

some weeks in the society of a madman and yet have no idea that he is mad.

The hull of a brig that had been made out steering athwart our hawse had now hove in sight. She was the clumsiest tub I had ever seen afloat, like a fifty-year-old north-country collier, with a run like a butter-box, a high stern sawn off, and bows resembling an apple. She flew Spanish colours, and was, perhaps, from Pernambuco, bound to Sierra Leone. She tumbled over the water like a buoy in tow; her studding-sails full of eyes, her old boom foresail slatting, and the sea slopping round her as though she had been a porpoise under canvas. Yet the ocean made her very ugliness picturesque. I called a hand aft to hoist away the small ensign to let her see what countryman we were, and at that moment eight bells were struck and a boatswain's pipe shrilled forwards.

As it was to be watch and watch with me and the captain, I went below to call him, and going to his door, I knocked, but got no answer. I knocked once more, but again receiving no answer, I tried the handle of

the door, but found that the key was turned, as, indeed, I now remembered he had turned it when he had gone to his cabin. Whether he was asleep, or in a trance, or what he was doing, I could not conceive; but I supposed he was asleep, and in a very deep sleep too, as he had taken no rest that night, and I went away and stood upon the quarter-deck to consider what I should do.

Seeing Sinnet forward I hailed him, and told him I had knocked twice on the captain's door and got no answer, and that the door was locked.

"Shall I stand his watch until he comes on deck?" he asked.

"But the men will think that queer," I replied.

"Ay, and so much the better," said he, "for I want to set 'em whispering; and by-and-by they'll be asking me questions, and that'll help me to bring 'em aft as we arranged, sir."

"Very well," said I. "Get you on to the poop while I shift my clothes, and then I'll send the steward aft. The captain will have to come to breakfast, any way. If

he's sleeping, let him lie; if ever brain wanted rest, his does."

On this Sinnet left me, and I repaired to my cabin, where I changed my clothes and freshened myself up with cold water, and then went into the cuddy again. The steward was preparing the table for breakfast. I stepped up to Mr. Black's door and knocked. He came out.

"Pray," said I, "did you see the captain just now? I understood you to say you were coming below to speak to him."

"The steward told me he was in his cabin and asleep," he replied. "But I mean to speak to him, sir. What you told me has vary conseederably agitated me, Mr. Lee. You did not tell me where Mr. Thomas was confined."

"Why, in his cabin yonder."

"What!" he shouted, "among the passengers! Eh, but that's too bad. I shall certainly protest against that, sir!" And he drew in his head and closed the door.

"That reminds me, steward, to tell you to have the chief mate's breakfast at the usual hour," said I. "I have the key in

my pocket, and when you are ready report to me."

"Yes, sir."

"Just step aft, and see if you can arouse the captain. He is supposed to be keeping watch and watch with me; and though I would rather he should take his rest, he may be annoyed if we let him sleep on. Don't make too much row."

He went to the captain's door and knocked several times, tapping lightly at first, and then handling his knuckles smartly. He got no answer, and I began to feel alarmed. Mad as he might be, the captain would still have the instincts of a seaman, and must awaken to a lighter summons than mine or the steward's if he had ears to hear it.

"I can't get any answer, sir," said the steward, coming back to me. "It's very strange, isn't it? He's not used to sleep like this, sir."

"I neither understand it nor like it," I replied.

At this moment Mr. Black came out of his cabin, and in a few seconds after Nelly's

door opened. She, quick as lightning, saw by my face that something was wrong, and came round to me.

"What is the matter?" she asked, in a low voice.

"The captain's cabin door is locked, and we cannot get him to answer us," I replied, in my usual voice; and I let her see by a sign that I wanted Mr. Black to hear my answer as well as she. Her face grew concerned in an instant, and she glanced at me with her eyes full of pained inquiry.

"Have you knocked, Mr. Lee?" asked Mr. Black, catching the dismay that was strong in me and Nelly, and that was evidently growing in the steward.

Before I could answer, the Espinosas' door opened and out came the Spaniard, followed by his wife; so here was now the cuddy half-full of people; at the same time, happening to glance forward, I saw some of the men in the waist of the ship staring aft, clearly surprised at seeing the boat-swain keeping watch.

"I have knocked, and so has the steward," said I, answering Mr. Black's question.

"What is it? What is it?" cried the Spaniard, in his quick way, looking into everybody's face, it seemed to me, all at once.

Now, this was too much, and to have all these people boring me with questions at a juncture of this kind was more than I could endure.

"Mr. Espinosa," said I, politely but firmly, "you will greatly oblige me by escorting Madam Espinosa on deck. Miss Maitland (here I gave her a look), will you please allow Mr. Black to conduct you on to the poop? My position just now is a difficult one, and I wish to be free to deal with it in the way that may be most conducive to our general security."

Mr. Black was about to speak, but Nelly walked up to him, put her arm through his, and, in a manner, helped him along to the companion steps; and the Espinosas followed with wondering faces, the Spaniard darting fierce whispers to his wife as they went.

When they were gone, I said to the steward, "I suppose you know that the chief officer is under arrest?"

"I have heard about it, sir."

"Have they told you why he is locked up?"

"Yes, sir—for threatening the captain's life."

"Well, that's a delusion—a lie. You have waited on the captain at this table; do you think he is in a fit state of mind to command this ship?"

"Why, sir, you ask me a plain question, and I'll answer it straight. I've all along thought him a queer gentleman; but you make me put two and two together, and taking what I've seen with my own eyes and what I've heard tell of his doings, such as chucking his dog overboard, and locking up Mr. Thomas, and making faces at the men, I don't believe he's fully sensible." Here he sunk his voice, with a look in the direction of the captain's cabin.

Upon this, I made up my mind to act decisively; so once more stepping aft, I beat heavily on the cabin door, at the same time rattling the handle. "Captain Flanders!" I shouted. No answer was returned. I went on to the poop, where I found the

boatswain walking to and fro, watched by the Espinosas and Mr. Black, who stood together. By the alarm on the Spaniard's face, it was plain that Mr. Black had told him about Mr. Thomas, and no doubt exaggerated the facts I had given him. Nelly stood alone to leeward, looking at the passing water.

"Bo'sun!" I exclaimed, "go forward and send all the hands aft;" and I stationed myself at the rail and waited.

In a few minutes the crew came rolling on to the quarter-deck. They were brimful of eagerness and curiosity, and stood in a crowd all about the capstan, every man's eyes bent on me; and a queerer lot of faces I never looked at. They were as silent as death, and before I spoke nothing could be heard fore and aft but the buzzing of the foam as it went along the ship's sides.

"Men," said I, "you have, all of you, heard by this time that your chief officer has been locked up in his cabin by order of the captain. I take it upon myself to tell you that there is not one atom of truth

in Captain Flanders' accusation against Mr. Thomas. What I have now to say is this: that for some time before we took the north-east trades, I had a fear that the captain was not right in his mind, and my suspicions have been proved by his later actions. I am very sorry to have to tell you this. There is very much in Captain Flanders' character that is admirable, and his insanity has moved my deepest pity. Though the safety of the ship was concerned, yet I forbore to hint my fears of the captain to any man aboard, wishing rather that you, men, should find out the truth for yourselves. However, matters have now reached a point when I find it time to speak out, and bring you all aft as witnesses. The captain, in the middle watch this morning, agreed to keep watch and watch with me; his watch has come around, and I have tried to wake him up: both the steward and I have knocked repeatedly, and we can get no answer from him. Whether mad or not, he is still our commander, and we all know what is expected of us and how we should act.

Therefore I have called you aft to help me with your advice. I want you to tell me whether, seeing that he will not answer and that he is not responsible for his actions, we shall break open his door and, if we find him alive, take it upon ourselves, for our own lives' sake and for those of yonder ladies and gentlemen, to secure him, and answer for our conduct when we reach port."

The men looked at one another; they were much surprised; they knew that things were wrong aft, but they could not guess how wrong, nor that they had been called aft to listen to a proposal that struck some of them as mutinous.

Suddenly the boatswain stepped forward.

"Mr. Lee and shipmates," said he, "I've listened to what the second officer has said, and likewise have I watched the skipper, and I'm bound to say that I don't think Captain Flanders is in his right mind. Take that buryin' job of poor Lanyon. Take his pitchin' his dog overboard. Take his lockin' up Mr. Thomas, who, as every man here knows, is as good an officer as any

sailor needs to sail with, a kind gentleman, and incapable of a wrongful act. Mates, if ye see a ship sailin' large with her torpsails furled, and nothen set but her top-gallant-s'ls, you may reckon the skipper's been taking more lunar observashuns than's good for his head. But to my way o' thinkin' queerer things ha' been done aboard this ship by the skipper than sailin' her under top-gallants'ls only. If he's in his cabin an' won't answer, there must be some bad reason at bottom, and as it may be a question of our lives, mates, and the salwation o' this ship, I'm for agreein' to what Mr. Lee says, and breakin' open the capt'n's door."

This short harangue put the matter in a new light before the men, who had probably found my address too tall for them. At all events, no sooner had the boatswain ceased than a murmur ran among them, and one sung out, "We're with the second officer: we all think he's quite right;" and another exclaimed, "If the skipper don't answer, it's right enough that his door should be busted open: there's no telling without it what may have come to him;" and several old seamen

spoke, among them Chips the carpenter, who said that he never had any doubt, he hadn't, after seein' the way in which Lanyon had been buried, that the captain wasn't sound in his upper works. He had tried to arguey with the bo'sun, but it wasn't no use; the bo'sun knew better than he. He were only a pore ignorant ship's carpenter; the cook's mate could teach *him* to suck eggs, etc.; all which he delivered with his hands buried in his trousers pockets, and his head rolling from side to side as he addressed first his right-hand neighbour, then his left, then somebody astern of him.

Having heard all that they had to say, and being fortified with the whole ship's company as witnesses, I ordered the carpenter to fetch the necessary tools to force the door; I also told two of the oldest seamen in each watch to stand out and follow the boatswain in the cuddy, and directed the rest of the men to go forward. I then turned to Mr. Black.

"You have heard," I exclaimed, "what has been said to the crew, and you can now judge the position we find ourselves in. I

should be glad if you will join us as a witness, so that, should any inquiry follow this business, you may prove that in what we did we were governed entirely by regard for the general safety."

He looked uneasily at me, and said he would be glad if I could do without him.

"Will Mr. Espinosa come, then?" said I.

"No, no!" shouted the Spaniard, with a sharp decisive accent, and a swift downward gesture of the hand.

I did not press the matter, but calling to the boatswain's mate in the port watch, that watch being now on deck, to keep a look out whilst I went below, I entered the cuddy, where the boatswain, carpenter, and four able seamen were waiting for me, and we all went in a body to the captain's cabin.

"We'd better give him another chance and knock again, sir," says Sinnet, in a low, awed voice as we stood before the door.

"Very well," said I, and on that I raised my fist and struck the door heavily; but, as I expected, we got no reply. "Now, car-

penter, do your work," I exclaimed, "and let us lose no more time."

Whereupon with a chisel and mallet he forced the lock, and the door opened. The moment we could see inside the cabin we raised a cry, for the first object that met our eyes was the body of the captain hanging from a cot-hook screwed into a beam; he had used such a short length of rope that the nape of his neck was close against the hook, and his head lay pressed upon his bosom by the deck above. A yard away from him was an overset chair, and his feet dangled within a foot and a half of the deck. He was dressed in his shirt and trousers, and was perhaps in his bunk when the resolution to hang himself seized him. Though I own I had not expected to find him alive, yet now that I saw him hanging there dead, the realization of my fear so exceeded all that my imagination could have depicted, that I was seized with a trembling, and felt the perspiration clammy on my forehead. The manner in which his head was bowed down prevented us from seeing his face—at least, the full horror of it in that posture was

not visible—but his limbs were straight as though smoothed down into quietness by the hand, and only the clenched fists gave any indication of the last struggle.

Recovering myself promptly, I placed the chair upright, jumped upon it and cut the body down. It was caught by the carpenter and one of the seamen, who laid it along the bunk and unhitched the rope around the neck. However, he was not only dead, but had been dead for above an hour or even longer. He was very nearly cold, and so rigid that we could not compose the head back; and there he lay, with his head thrust forward so that his chin pressed his chest just below his throat; and if it had not been for his eyes and his perfect stillness, you would have thought he was alive, and endeavouring to catch sight of something beyond his feet.

When we had put him in his bunk, and after we were all satisfied that he was dead, I ran my eye around the cabin in the hope of finding something in writing; for I had heard that even the wildest madmen have had lucid intervals before they destroyed

themselves, and written down in plain collected English their motives for committing suicide. However, nothing of that kind was to be seen. A large Bible lay open on his table, and all around were writing materials, a sextant, magnifying glasses, some scientific instruments and things of that kind, with a chronometer-case, on the top of which was the revolver he had carried. The cabin was in good order; there was no litter, no confusion; even the coat and waistcoat he had taken off before turning in were neatly folded upon a large mahogany chest.

"We can do nothing more, men," said I, speaking in a whisper; and we left the cabin, the carpenter jamming his chisel under the door to keep it closed. We stood together in the cuddy a short while, talking over what had happened, for we were all of us more shocked than I have words to tell. Had we merely heard that the captain had hanged himself we should not have thought so much of it; it was the sight of his body that made the thing awful, and, above all, his stiffened neck and his head

erect when he was on his back, and in the attitude of a man gazing earnestly, though his eyes were as dead and glassy as the dead-lights in the deck.

“Having seen how he has died,” said I, “none of you can have any doubt that he was mad; and that being so, we may take it that his suspicion of Mr. Thomas was only a part of his madness, like his lecture over Lanyon, and his throwing his dog overboard. A man whom we know to be innocent ought not to be let suffer; and I therefore propose that we at once liberate Mr. Thomas, and that he take command of this ship.”

They all promptly assented, and I unlocked the chief mate's door and knocked; and on his singing out for me to come in, I threw open the door. He had been writing, but had risen on hearing the key turned, and stood with his hand on a little table. The men kept at a respectful distance; however, we had moved so quietly and talked in such low voices, that beyond guessing by the thumping on the captain's cabin that there was trouble to get him to

awaken, he had no idea of what had happened, and consequently a look of alarm came into his face when he saw the men in the cuddy.

To spare him any suspense I immediately told him that the captain was dead, that indeed he had hanged himself, that we had broken into the cabin and found the body, and that the men there were some hands I had called aft to witness to my conduct.

"Whilst the captain's death proves his insanity, sir," I said in a loud voice, that the men might hear me, "it also proves the groundlessness of his charges against you. This being so, Mr. Thomas, it became my duty to immediately release you, and it is now the general wish that you will take command and carry the ship to her destination. She could not be in safer hands, nor any ship's company desire a better and kinder commander."

"We're all of that opinion here, sir," said Sinnet, and the others murmured their assent.

The little man had turned very pale when he heard me say that the captain had

hanged himself, but he listened to the end without interruption, and after shaking my hand, turned to the men and thanked them for their words.

“So far from wishing to take the captain’s life,” said he, “I can only say it would go against my heart to hurt a fly; but now that we all of us know he was mad, I feel I shall take my old place again in your good will, as a seaman who has always tried to do his duty and whose log-book is a clean one.”

No more was said in this way, on either side. Sailors are not fond of ceremony. We had done everything in a shipshape fashion, and all we had to do was to bury Captain Flanders and, as we say at sea, make a new point of departure. To the carpenter, who was also sail-maker, was left the task of sewing up the dead body in canvas and preparing it for a sea-burial; the others were sent forward to give the story to their mates, and Mr. Thomas and I went on the poop.

The passengers were all hanging about the companion in a great state of anxiety

to hear the news ; but if they hardly knew whether to look for the captain, they (that is, the Espinosas and Mr. Black) were quite unprepared to see the mate ; and no sooner did Mr. Thomas show his head than Espinosa backed wildly into his wife and very nearly capsized her, and Mr. Black turned yellow, and his eyes became as round in his head as the buttons on his waistcoat. He immediately stammered out—

“Where is the captain, Mr. Lee?”

“He is dead,” I replied, and was going to explain, when Espinosa shouted out from behind his wife—

“Dait ! What you say, eh ? de capitano dait ?”

“Ay,” said I, “as dead as hanging ever made a man.”

“God guide us !” ejaculated Mr. Black, keeping the companion between himself and Mr. Thomas, and looking at him with an expression of horror. “Who has hanged him ?”

“Why, he has hanged himself, sir,” I replied ; “and if Mr. Espinosa is not afraid to come within earshot, I shall be able to tell you and him all about it.”

At the same time I beckoned to Nelly, who came over and shook hands with Mr. Thomas—an action that somewhat inspired the others, for they all three of them drew near.

It took me a good twenty minutes to relate what I had to say, or rather to tell the story in such a fashion as to make them see how entirely true it was. The Spaniard incessantly ejaculated, and when I described the sight we had beheld in the cabin on our forcing open the door, Mr. Black groaned aloud, and Espinosa's legs quivered in his trousers. I informed them that the body was below; would they go and inspect it before the carpenter sewed it up? No, not for worlds. Mr. Black slewed himself away from me, and Espinosa shook his head as though he wanted to get rid of his nose. As to Madam Espinosa, she stood near her husband, listening to me with a face as white as a sheet; whilst Nelly was overwhelmed with horror, and kept on exclaiming to Mr. Thomas in a low voice as if she could not credit what she heard.

However, the truth was now out, and it

was for Mr. Black and the Espinosas to make the best or worst of it. I had said all I considered necessary, and after again pointing out that the most conclusive proof of the captain's insanity had lain in his suspicion of Mr. Thomas, I finished by saying that the chief mate would now take command of the vessel, and though no one was more grieved than I by the shocking end of a man whose many good qualities had won my cordial respect, yet, now that he was dead, and Mr. Thomas in command, I should be able to sleep with a sense of security I had not enjoyed for weeks. Here-upon Mr. Black came up to Mr. Thomas and shook his hand, very honestly saying that when Mr. Lee had acquainted him with the captain's suspicions he could not imagine they were unfounded, as he never had reason to suppose the captain insane, although he owned the poor fellow had sometimes talked oddly; but now that he had listened to Mr. Lee's story, he felt he had done the chief mate an injustice, and begged his pardon. Mr. Espinosa also came up and said something to Mr. Thomas, but what I

did not hear, for, I was then talking to Nelly.

So in this way we managed to get things into a proper course, which happily proved an easier job than I had reckoned on.

CHAPTER II.

CAPE HORN.

WE buried the remains of Captain Flanders at noon that day. Mr. Thomas read the service, and I noticed throughout that Chips listened with great satisfaction, and made many efforts to catch the eye of the boatswain, who, however, was not to be courted into looking his way. When at last the body was overboard, and the grating replaced, every one experienced a feeling of relief. Out of respect to the memory of the skipper, no work had been done through the morning; the men, therefore, had had plenty of leisure to talk over him and his death, and, having some sort of superstition about suicides and foul winds, they were uneasy until they had given the corpse its last toss.

After the burial, the crew went forward to get their dinner; they were afterwards turned to and set about the different jobs which a ship is always requiring done, but they were serious enough for the remainder of the day. I heard no oaths, no loud laughs; they spoke in subdued voices, but it was not so much the gloom as the awe of death that kept them quiet. I believe that the old seamen I had taken with me aft made the most of the sight they had seen, and as one grim tale is sure to produce another in the forecabin, I can well imagine the sailors got scaring one another with their stories.

And, to tell the truth, we who lived in the cuddy were depressed enough. When Thomas and I came to talk over the captain, we found, after all was said, that for anything that had been unpleasant only his madness was to blame. He had been a gentleman, a man of education, full of humanity, a man who understood his business as a sailor, and of strong religious feelings. This was to have been discovered by lifting up his madness, so to speak, and looking under it.

Mr. Black was especially gloomy. One would have thought him the last man in the world likely to be guilty of sentiment, and yet he was as superstitious as the most ignorant man in the fore-castle. He said plainly enough at lunch that day, that he considered the captain's death a bad omen, and that, though he was not a rich man, he would be glad to lose a hundred pounds to be ashore, he didn't care where.

I told him I hoped his nervousness did not arise from any doubt of Mr. Thomas's capacity.

"Nay," he answered; "I have no doot that Mr. Thomas is a vary capable officer. It's not Mr. Thomas."

"What you say it is, den?" said Espinosa, who listened anxiously.

"Sir," said Mr. Black, "I'm a Scotsman, with Scotch prajudices, and I could not make a Spaniard understan' my thochts if I was to express them."

"Prejudices often turn out to be very foolish things, Mr. Black," said Nelly.

"Then you do not believe in instinctive perçaptions, perhaps, Miss Maitland?" said Mr. Black.

"I don't know what you mean," said Nelly.

"By instinctive perceptions I mean the power of reading the future in signs and events which come under our nooses, mam."

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Black!" exclaimed Madam Espinosa, nodding approvingly at the Scotchman. "I would not walk under a ladder for worlds, and dreaming of a wedding makes me miserable for weeks."

"But what is it you fear, eh, Mistaire Black? What you frighten of, eh?" cried Espinosa, who, having been alarmed by the Scotchman's observations, and not understanding his metaphysics, wanted a plain answer.

"I could not mak' you understan' my reasoning," replied Mr. Black; "it would be wasting words, sir."

On this Espinosa asked his wife some questions in Spanish; but she waved him off with a "tut, tut."

"Valga me Dios!" shouted the Spaniard, losing his temper. "Mistaire Lee, please

you tell me, sare, what for Mistaire Black is afraid?"

"Why, Mr. Espinosa, Mr. Black, I presume, is a believer in omens, and he thinks, because Captain Flanders hanged himself, that ill-luck will befall the *Waldershare*."

"That's about it," said Mr. Black.

"I don't know why you should think so, sir, for all that," said I, warmly. "We have a good officer in command, and a fine crew, and I hope I know my duty, Mr. Black."

"Lookee you here, shentleman, please," said Espinosa, with the calmness of desperation, rising from his chair and extending both his yellow claws to me; "veel you, once for all, tell me what is it you are afraid of? What is se dangaire? Mr. Black he veel not answare—Mr. Lee, veel you speak to me, saire?"

"There is no danger!" I shouted. "Mr. Black has got a notion into his head that we're all doomed. We can't help Mr. Black's notions, but we're not obliged to lose the ship because the captain has hanged himself!" And feeling rather angry, I got

up, saying, "Miss Maitland, let me take you on deck," and we left them sitting at the table.

"Of all the abominable little cowards," I said to Nelly as we went up the companion steps, "that Spaniard is the worst. And what a vicious croaker is that same Black! Send him into the forecastle to palaver the crew, and I bet that presently not a hand would turn out to do a stroke of work for fear of meeting a ghost."

We found Mr. Thomas pacing the deck. I told him what the passengers were talking about, and asked him to put a stopper on Black's tongue. I would keep a look out, I said, whilst he lunched. The wind had warmed up into a magnificent breeze, just free enough to enable us to carry the fore-topmast studding-sail, and we were running over the water as steadily and swiftly as a railway train. To find a fine steady breeze like this in these latitudes was a great piece of good fortune; it made this part of the voyage like a yachting trip. The heavens had the soft blue of the English summer sky, and the clouds which sailed along it

were white, small, and full, like puffs of smoke. What little swell there was was right astern, and the ship went over it in such long, graceful sweeps that it was scarcely perceptible.

Now that there was no captain to watch me, and Mr. Thomas knew my story, I had no diffidence in talking to Nelly. We stood together to windward, looking over the rail at the ship's copper glancing through the tumble of foam and green water, and talked of Captain Flanders, home, the voyage, our experiences so far; and if we had been depressed before, we were, at all events, as happy now as two children, standing close together, with our hands clasped and hidden between us. Once again I told her that the dearest memory of my life would be the recollection of the courage and love that had brought her to my side, and made a long voyage so happy that I could never wish it ended.

"I always felt when I made up my mind to join you that you would not long remain angry," she answered, with a quiet smile. She then asked me if I thought Mr. Thomas

was likely to command the ship home? I said no doubt he would; that we should probably ship another mate at Callao, but whether a first or second mate I could not guess: if a second mate, which would only be fair to me, I should then be first officer, and having filled that post once, it was quite likely I should be appointed again, and then my next berth would be captain.

The mere talking of such things was enough to make me light-hearted. But I have seen hens cackle over chalk eggs, and I don't think I should have chatted so blithely had I known the sort of hatching job that lay before me.

At noon to-day we had found ourselves exactly one hundred miles north of the Line, having made ninety-eight miles southing since ten o'clock on the preceding night. If this breeze held, therefore, we should be on the other side of the equator at eight bells in the middle watch, for our speed now was nearer ten than nine knots.

After being absent half an hour—knowing I was with Nelly, the rogue would suspect I should not be impatient—Mr. Thomas

came on deck laughing, followed by Mr. Black and the Espinosas, all whom seemed in a very much better humour than I had left them in. He came over to me chuckling heartily, with his eyes merry and his face flushed; and I feared for the moment that his new command had slightly turned his head, and that he had been drinking to his own success a little too freely. However, his articulation was all right, and it turned out that his manner was simply owing to intense self-complacency: for first of all he had argued with Mr. Black on omens, in such a manner as to win a handsome compliment from that gentleman; then he had convincingly satisfied Mr. Espinosa that he (namely, the Spaniard), had never been safer in all his life than he was now; then Madam Espinosa had been very gracious; and also he had told them some stories which had set them all laughing, and one tale had so tickled Mr. Espinosa that he made Mr. Thomas repeat it; in short, the three passengers had tried their best to make him amends for the injury they had done him in crediting

Captain Flanders' suspicion, and had almost turned his head with their compliments. Madam Espinosa's politeness pleased him most: she used to be rude to him and even laugh at his size; but to-day she had flattered him. Indeed, he looked so pleased that I suspected she must have praised his togs, perhaps complimented him on his waistcoats; and as he had always secretly thought Madam Espinosa a fine woman, and as her ridiculing him had wounded his dandyism beyond anything he would have liked to own, her praising and complimenting him now made him feel himself a fine little fellow indeed.

Mr. Thomas was no Don Juan; but I once told him that his idea of heaven was sitting handsomely dressed in velvet and black cloth in the midst of a circle of stout tall women. "Tall? yes," he said. "Stout? well, stout too. I really think you've hit it, Lee." But dandy as he was, and peppery withal, there was no man I ever sailed with whom I liked better than little Abraham Thomas.

So, within a few hours after the death

of Captain Flanders, the *Waldershare* was comfortable fore and aft, the men quiet and well disposed, full of confidence in the judgment and skill of their new commander, and the passengers satisfied and easy in their minds.

There was some talk between Mr. Thomas and me of bringing the boatswain aft as second mate; but we finally decided, for several reasons, on leaving him where he was, and where he was most useful, and on taking watch and watch, just as though the captain had been still aboard, during the rest of the voyage out. Such articles as we required to carry on the ship's reckoning we took out of the captain's cabin, and then Chips made the door fast. It was a cabin no one would have chosen to occupy after what had happened in it, and, indeed, no one cared to loiter near it after dark.

I have often laughed since at my superstitiousness, but I will own that many a time, when the cuddy has been lighted by only one dim lamp, I have gone below in the middle watch and glanced nervously aft at the cabin door as it stood dark with the

shadow of the companion steps upon it, thinking of the dead man's singular belief in spirits, with an uncomfortable shiver, and wondering, if there *were* such things as ghosts, how they managed at sea, when every day's reckoning increased the distance of the body astern from the vessel it belonged to.

The rattling breeze carried us across the Line that night, and held until we were as far south as $4^{\circ} 24'$, veering sometimes to the southward, sometimes to the westward, sometimes laying our yards hard against the lee rigging, sometimes falling free and allowing us to carry topmast and top-gallant studding-sails. It then failed us, and for a whole week we lay boxing the yards about to the catspaws, but always sneaking steadily forwards, sometimes with barely enough air to lift the foot of the royals, and across a sea like burnished brass, which the stem of the ship broke into a hundred threads.

I remember on one of these nights standing with Nelly watching the crescent moon rising like a blood-red Chinese lantern but of a haze as thick as a cloud in the

south-west. The sea was quite calm ; there was not a ruffle of air upon it, though some air there must have been aloft, for the ship was moving and the phosphorus was revolving in the eddies of the wake ; the reflection of the moon in the water was exactly as though drops of blood were falling one after the other, and spreading as if the fluid mingled with the water as it sank ; the stars were large, but hot and faint, and the ship lay all in darkness ; when suddenly we heard a sound like a great sigh in the air, and presently another, and then another. One would have thought that old Neptune himself had risen to make his moan to Diana ; the sound was surprisingly plaintive.

I knew what it was, but would not say, wanting to see the effect on Nelly. She looked all around and up in the air.

" Oh, Will ! what can it be ? " she asked.

" Not poor Captain Flanders, I hope," said I with a laugh ; and, taking her hand, I led her across the deck.

" Where are they ? " I inquired of the fellow at the wheel.

"Yonder on the port beam, sir."

"There ! do you see that, Nelly ?" I exclaimed ; and there not above a biscuit's throw from the ship was a large whale or grampus, just risen, its back like a ship, keel up, the phosphorus glimmering all around it, and then it made the sound like a heavy respiration. Before it vanished another rose astern, and then another on the starboard quarter, and then another on the port bow, until the sea appeared full of them, and their breathing, mingled with the flap of the canvas and the wash of the water, and all the outer effect of the red moonlight dropping its lustre in the ocean, and the pale, hazy shine of the stars, and the darkness, was so impressive that we remained silent until the last respiration had ceased, and for some time we could only speak in whispers.

At last, on a Monday morning, a light breeze then blowing astern, the white trade-clouds showed overhead, and by two o'clock in the afternoon we had got the south-east trades strong on the port bow ; and away sprang the ship like a thing possessed,

her tall spars all aslant, the lee rigging as slack as the clewlines, and the leaping waters a smother of froth all around her. We took these trades in 10° S. and 27° W., the eastern coast of South America under our lee, and as I pricked off our course on the chart and my eye caught the name of Pernambuco, I wondered how it had fared with our Yankee friend, and whether his taut little barque was still struggling, like ourselves, with the sea, or safe in port.

We had a fine run as far as 33° S., when we lost the trades; then picked up a westerly gale with thick weather, which gave us double-reefed topsails and streaming decks for six days; and now it began to grow a little chilly, and Señor Espinosa was not seen often on deck.

Until we had doubled the Horn it seemed that we were to meet with no further adventures; everything of note had happened north of the Line. We did not sight above three ships during the whole run down the South Atlantic, and no land but the eastern coast of the Falkland Islands; and then,

when this land lay a mere blue shadow on the starboard beam, there being a heavy sea on, and blowing half a gale of wind from the north-west, we sighted a little brig right ahead, bound like ourselves round Cape Horn.

I had charge of the ship at the time, and Nelly asked me to run as close to the little vessel as I dared, that we might be able to see the people aboard and speak her. We were overhauling her hand over fist, and I ported the helm to go to windward of her, and stood with Nelly at the lee rail to look at her as we went past. I do not believe that she was more than a hundred tons burden, and she was loaded so deep that she seemed smaller than she was. She resembled a ship's long-boat. Her topsails were close reefed, and so low was she in the water that when she sank in the hollow of a sea nothing showed but these narrow bands of sail and her bare yards over them; indeed, every time she sank she appeared to have gone for good; it was enough to bring the heart into a man's throat to watch her. She rolled and pitched frightfully, and her

masts wavered to and fro like a stick in the hand of a band-leader.

Just before we got abreast of her she shipped a whole green sea right over her forecastle. It was like watching a breaker on a coast comb over a rock. She was hidden by the spray and the water, but up she came again, shaking her side like a dog, with the bright water streaming out of every scupper-hole, and pouring out of the foot of her fore-topmast staysail. She constantly pitched the whole length of her rudder out of water, and then up would fly her bows and heave out ten feet of her keel into the air.

Her littleness amid the great rolling deep was enough to impress the memory, and she is before my mind's eye now as vividly as though I had just removed my gaze from her. When we were about a quarter of a mile astern of her, she hoisted English colours; the flag was run up and blew right away out over the sea, but when it was half-mast high they stopped hoisting.

"By George!" I shouted, "she's in distress after all! What on earth shall we be able to do for her in this sea?"

But on looking at her through the glass I found there was a turn in the signal halliards, and at the same moment they lowered away the flag, bent it on afresh and hoisted it chock a block; and as the meteor flamed at the peak, the plucky little vessel almost leaped right out of water, as though she rebuked us for daring to think that the seas were too much for her.

As we approached, a man wrapped in oilskins stood upon the bulwarks just abaft the weather main-rigging, holding on to a backstay with one hand whilst with the other he flourished a speaking-trumpet. When she rolled towards us, the toppling water stood high above the man's head, and I expected every minute to see him washed away. Two men stood at the little wheel, and a large black retriever dog ran up and down the deck, barking furiously at us as we approached.

She proved to be the *Betsy*, from Monte Video to Huasco; and the master, through his trumpet, asked me for my latitude and longitude. We passed her too rapidly for much speaking, and in a few minutes she

was on our lee quarter. I noticed a man clamber out on the jibboom to snug the jib, that showed some disposition to blow clear of its gaskets. Three times whilst he was there the vessel buried her bowsprit, and he disappeared under the water, each time emerging dripping like a drowned rat, and hove high in the air until he could have looked down upon the vessel as if she stood on end on her stern. We watched her rising and falling, sometimes the whole of her hull poised on the top of a tall sea, sometimes even her topsails invisible, until she vanished in the haze and mist of spray that thickened the horizon.

This gale carried us down as far as the latitude of Staten Island; a dead calm then followed it, the horizon all around as thick as pea-soup, and a heavy South Pacific swell rolling up from the westward.

To know what a heavy swell really means, one must be becalmed off Cape Horn. Happily the calms, as a rule, are very short-lived; but whilst they last they are worse than gales of wind. Being without steerage way, the vessel falls broadside on,

and rolls both yardarms to the water's edge. It is impossible to stand without holding on, it is difficult to sit, it is almost as difficult to lie. Everything not securely lashed fetches away. The confusion aboard the *Waldershare* for two hours during this calm was supreme. We were at lunch when the wind suddenly left us, and in a few moments the vessel had rolled pretty nearly everything off the table. The steward, whilst picking up the things on the deck, cut his hand with a piece of broken glass, and the pain or the sight of the blood startling him, he jumped up in a hurry, was thrown headlong against my chair, and sent me sprawling. Madam Espinosa, seeing me disappear, and the vessel rolling at the same moment with a really awful lurch, *dishing* the green water over her quarter-deck bulwarks, a hundred articles bolting and clattering to leeward at the same moment, while the groans and shrieking of the timbers and bulkheads and cargo of the whole ship were deafening, uttered a scream, shouting out, "We're sinking! we're sinking!" and, in her terror, threw her arms

round the neck of her husband, who received at the same moment the contents of a water-jug in his waistcoat, whilst a large leg of cold roast pork went wallowing down under the table against his legs. Attacked in this way in the neck, bosom, and legs, and the slop and temperature of the deluge of cold water helping to give a peculiar edge to the shriek of his wife in his ear, the Spaniard (of whose courage I have already recorded my opinion) started up, and, in his effort to free himself from his wife's embrace, not only tumbled her over, but fell under the table himself.

So now here were four of us sprawling upon the deck, whilst the cries of Madam Espinosa, the execrations of her husband, the smash of plates and dishes, and, above all, the frightful straining of the ship, produced an uproar, and an alarming uproar too, of a kind no words could furnish any idea of.

Though it was easy to fall down, it was extremely hard to get up again ; and as the steward had vanished to bind up his hand, and as Mr. Black durst not let go of the

table for fear of rolling under it, and Nelly was also holding on for dear life, there was no one to help me pull Madam Espinosa out and set her on her legs again. However, heavy as she was, I succeeded in getting her on to a chair, but I gave myself no trouble with her husband ; my contempt of his cowardice stopped me from lending him a hand, and I let him crawl about among the dishes until he emerged near the mizzen-mast with a small cut over his eye—of which, however, he was not sensible, until Nelly told him he was bleeding ; when, putting his hand to his forehead and bringing it away with blood upon it, he roared out something in Spanish, and, after a good deal of reeling and diving, fetched his cabin and shut himself up.

Soon after I had gone on deck, to keep a look-out for Thomas whilst he lunched, I saw that we should not long be bothered by this calm ; for all away in the quarter out of which this mountainous swell was rolling was a long, broad livid cloud, with a sort of whitish haze hanging about it, that a man had only to look at to know to

be snow. We had double-reefed topsails and the foresail set; but Thomas (coming on deck to my call), not knowing but that there was a hurricane in the cloud, sung out for all hands to shorten sail: and scarcely were the reef-tackles hauled out, when the ship lay down like an anchored buoy in a race-current to a real Cape Horn blast, with the air so full of snow that it was like shaking the inside of a feather-bed over a man, and the air so dark that you couldn't see the mainmast from the wheel.

In a minute the decks were all white with snow fore and aft, and the yards, masts, and standing rigging lined with it; the cold was so intense that the tears froze in one's eyes, and the snow turned to ice on the decks and made them fit only for skates. The men aloft on the yards glimmered in the gloom and through the blinding fall of snow like snow-figures; indeed, it was as if a whole mountain of snow had fetched away to windward and was blowing athwart us in broad sheets.

However, the wind was not so fierce but that we could carry the three close-reefed

topsails and storm trysail ; and though the snow and the cold and the darkness were bad enough, yet to my mind they were not so bad as the calm they had replaced, for the ship was comparatively steady, and ratching to the southward and eastward through a sea that was rising quickly.

That the seas off the Horn should be the heaviest in the world is not surprising when it is considered that the ocean there completely belts the globe ; so that a man who should start, say, abreast of the Horn on the parallel of 58° could run the whole length of the latitudinal line, and arrive back at the point of his departure, without meeting any other hindrance than ice.

We had a taste not only of the weather, but of the seas of this part of the globe, during the next two days ; for after the snow-squall had passed, the wind settled down into a heavy gale, and by the first dog-watch it was blowing so furiously that we were obliged to heave the ship to under a close-reefed main-topsail.

It was a fine, clear night, with brilliant stars, the Southern Cross hanging in full

glory, and the Magellan clouds like small heaps of luminous dust upon the black-blue sky to the southward of our royal-masthead. When the snow cleared off we had sighted a large iceberg away on the horizon on our lee quarter, and every time the seas hove us high we could see it quite plain in the darkness, like a very faint greenish cloud, though it was fully seven or eight miles distant. But the sea was so magnificent a sight that I made up my mind that Nelly should see it; and she came on deck for the first time that day, as well wrapped up as a Greenland woman. I dragged her to windward and stationed her under the hurricane-house, by which name we distinguished a square of canvas seized on to the lower mizzen-rigging to serve the officer on duty as some protection against the wind; and passing the bight of a rope round her waist, I secured her to a belaying-pin, for I wanted my own hands, and did not intend that she should trust to hers, seeing that when the ship heeled over to leeward the deck made such a slope that it was like sitting on the top of a wall and looking

down, and that, had she let go, she would have gone overboard or broken her neck against the hencoops.

Once secured and safe, and looking about her, she was speechless for awe and astonishment; indeed, used as I was to the sea, I had never seen it so grand and monstrous as on this night. Every time the ship sank, the wave to windward appeared to stand as high as the mizzen-top; one could only hold on and look, and stop breathing. The receding surge left her spars bending to meet the coming sea, and her deck lay all aslope ready to receive the ponderous world of water; but then, as it came roaring at her, its flickering top blotting out the stars halfway to the zenith, the ship would heel away from it, heel further and further yet, as she mounted the almost perpendicular mountain and hung as though some giant hand held her out at arm's length by the keel, until she had soared to the summit upon which for a moment she could lie with a level deck. And this was the moment to look down over her side; for you gazed into a black pit filled with the roar of raving waters,

and the fierce artillery of expiring foam, whilst the sea as far as the horizon raged below like a hilly country viewed from a mountain. In a moment, as the ship went down the further slope, she heeled over to windward, and the forcing of her mast against the gale multiplied the screaming and hooting in the rigging, until she had sunk to the bottom of the hollow, between the sea that had left her and the sea that was coming upon her, when the trysail would flap idly in the calm while the wind still yelled in her top-gallant and topmast rigging.

Coming on deck from the cuddy and witnessing such a sight on a sudden would have alarmed a hardier mind than even brave little Nelly's. Below, one could not have imagined the terror and sublimity of this mighty Pacific Sea merely from the sweeping, headlong motion of the ship. However, in a short time her fear passed. I told her, as well as the uproar would let me, that the vessel was absolutely under control and behaving nobly, and bade her take her fill of the sight without any misgiving. Had

the ship been sinking, and I had assured her there was no danger, she would have believed me. Her confidence in me was the finest and highest part of her love, and as she stood holding on my arm whilst I supported myself by grasping the rigging, I felt the strength and tenacity our love was getting out of this voyage that she was making with me.

For two days, as I have written, this gale held, and we lay hove to in the terrific sea, coming to and falling off as regularly as the coil of the waves, and going bodily to the eastwards on the trend of the combers. On the third day the gale veered to the northward, which gave us a beam wind; and we made the most of it, as any man may believe, for we had had as much of Cape Horn as we wanted, and our frozen toes and our frozen tears, which hung literally like iron on our nipped and weather-beaten cheeks, made us pine for latitudes lying nearer the sun.

We had eight degrees to run to the westward yet before we hauled to the northward, Mr. Thomas's notion of doubling the Horn

being to pass wide of the Falklands well to the southward of the Cape, and not to head north until the ship was in 84° W., "for this rule," said he, "provides against the nor'-nor'-westers." Our true course now, therefore, was the sun's, and every evening he should set over our flying jibboom end; but Thomas, for the sake of speed and to bring the wind and the sea abaft the beam, did not object to a little southing (our latitude being $56^{\circ} 19'$); that is, while the sky held clear and there was no danger of running into an iceberg before sighting it.

And so, with a whole gale a couple of points abaft the beam, and the sea a little further aft yet, we shook three reefs out of the main-topsail, set the top-gallant sail over it, set the double-reefed fore-topsail and reefed foresail, and these, with the main-trysail, fore-topmast staysail, and inner jib, ran the *Waldershare* through it as though a comet had got her in tow; she had never before approached such sailing. She ran almost as fast as the seas which broke under her into whole oceans of foam. On either counter the froth stood as high as the

main-brace bumpkins; one could almost have reached a handful of it by bending over the poop-rail. The rigging, frozen as hard as iron, stood like crowbars, and our wake astern ran over the green transparent hills like a broad white dusty highway over mountains.

But even this pace would not suit Mr. Thomas. "We have been two days hove to," he said, "and becalmed for some hours. If the ship has it in her she shall make up for lost time;" so it was "out with more reefs," the whole main-topsail and foresail were set, the mainsail reefed and the tack boarded, the whole watch tailing on to the jigger and bowsing the tack down, until it seemed as if the deck would be ripped out of the ship.

This, I remember, was on a Thursday morning, and the extra canvas had been set by the time I came on deck a little before noon with my sextant in hand. All the passengers were on the poop, for the sun shone bright—a silvery, brilliant light, without a particle of heat in it—and over the steel-blue sky the clouds were driving to the

south in volumes like smoke. Lying in my bunk, I had felt that the ship was being furiously driven by the strain and quiver, the fierce quick trembling, the terrific booming of the sea like the report of an earthquake, the ceaseless roaring to right and left, and the feel of the whole hull as she made her flying leaps from crest to crest.

But the reality could not be understood until it was seen, and it was not until I reached the deck that I began to think my little shipmate was overdoing it; that the mainsail he had set was just the extra amount of canvas she could not bear, and that if we didn't bring some of our spars about us presently we should deserve all the congratulations we were likely to get.

However, I had to take an observation before I could look about me, and when that was done, I put my sextant down and took a squint aloft with a shake of my head, for I knew that Thomas was watching me, though it was not my place to remonstrate in words. He merely replied to my silent protest with a grin, and went up to the passengers, rubbing his hands and beating them about

his chest, and looking at Mr. Black and around him as much as to say, "What think you of this, ladies and gentlemen?" And, indeed, they were as pleased as he, and I caught Espinosa (who was wrapped in an immense fur coat, with a cape that came over his head, in the hairy embrasure of which nothing was visible but his nose, that stuck far out and was *scaling* like the flesh after a fever, from the cold) nodding with great delight. But Nelly, who observed every movement of mine, had seen me shake my head, and though her eyes sparkled like diamonds, and her cheeks were as red as roses under the keen gale, she no longer looked approvingly at Mr. Thomas.

Suddenly a voice hailed the poop. "Ice right ahead, sir!"

I sprang to the rail and thrust my head overboard to see forward; and as the ship soared on a sea there stood on the horizon, right in a line with our jibboom, a pale broad outline like a faint greenish cloud.

"Shall we go to leeward or to windward of it, sir?" I sung out to Mr. Thomas, who had perched himself on a hencoop and was

looking at the ice with his arm entwined in the mizzen-rigging.

"Why, to leeward, Mr. Lee. Put your helm over,—so, you have it—keep her at that now. Can you make out any more of them, Mr. Lee?"

"No, sir," I answered; and hailing the forecastle, I told one of the men to jump aloft and let me know if there were any more icebergs in sight ahead. He went as high as the fore-topmast cross-trees, and after looking, called out that he could only see that one.

He had scarcely said this when the main-tack parted with a loud report; the sheet carried away at the same moment; a few seconds after the jib split right in halves, and then commenced a horrible hullabaloo. The beating of the canvas was like peals of thunder or discharges of heavy artillery. Before half the watch were on their legs the mainsail was in rags, whipping round and round the mainstay like parcelling, writhing about the main rigging, or streaming straight out in the wind in long whips, while the jib-boom jumped under the shattering dance of

the jib, and the hauks rattled on the stay as though rounds of grape were being fired into the bows of the ship.

However, though we had lost two sails our spars were safe, and the ship was as easy again, though even now she was carrying all the canvas she needed, and when she dipped her head she piled the foam over her top-gallant forecastle, where it was caught by the wind pouring in fury out of the foot of the foresail, and blown high in the air and half a mile to leeward. We had men enough in the watch to make short work of the shattered canvas, and by the time they had come from aloft, the iceberg lay broad on our port bow.

It was one of the largest I had ever seen, and for shape and colour the finest. The mind could not conceive anything more grand and awful in its solitude than this iceberg. When one sees a number of icebergs together, the contrast lessens their impressiveness. You find yourself wondering which is the biggest, and comparing their appearance ; and as one courts your eye away from another, you cannot concentrate

your admiration; and, moreover, the idea of solitude, that is one of the elements of sublimity, is not conveyed.

But here, towering upon the water, whose mighty waves burst against its motionless sides and veiled the lower part of it in a haze of spray, was a single iceberg as large as an island, with glittering peaks pointing like spires and minarets to the heavens; the whole gigantic body dwarfing our ship into a mere jolly-boat; whilst the sun, that stood to leeward of us, poured upon it its light which the flying clouds sometimes obscured, so that at one moment the huge and beautiful mass was sparkling as if a thousand dazzling many-coloured fires had been kindled among its transparent blue and green ledges, and in its marble-coloured boulder blocks, and in its luminous ravines, and in its tall, crystalline pinnacles, whilst at another moment the gorgeous sparkles would vanish out of it as though the breath of the gale had extinguished them all at once, and the huge shape, under the shadow of a cloud, would turn to a desolate ashen grey, the bleaching of the snow on the summit strongly marked upon the greenish

rock-like transparency of the lower parts, while every stroke of the sea awoke a hollow roaring that filled our ears as the ship went rushing past. It was the only object in sight all around the horizon, and the mere effect of the loneliness of it upon the imagination, its resemblance to an island with spires and outlines of dwelling-places upon it, and the thought that it was all solid ice, the most desolate thing in the world—though a little heat would melt it all away, so that not a vestige would remain of that stupendous body, around which the seas were roaring and beating themselves to pieces as they might against a granite coast—filled the mind with thoughts beyond the power of the strongest pen to express. As it receded astern it seemed to change its colour a hundred times over, being at one time a faint green, then blues and violets stealing into it, then flashing out all in a white blaze, then standing like the summit of a gigantic height of white marble, whose base was at the bottom of the sea, until it became at last as we had first beheld it, a mere pale, faint cloud upon the horizon.

CHAPTER III.

THE WATER-LOGGED BRIG.

ON Monday, September 16th, we were in latitude 35° S., and longitude 97° W., having been blown nearly three hundred miles to the westward of our course through a hurricane from the north-east, that caught us when we were about two hundred and fifty miles west of Narborough Island, and heading for Callao, which port we had reckoned on making by September 20. The like of that hurricane I had never before experienced; but because I have already given so many close accounts of the storms we met with, I have purposely skipped it here, wishing, indeed, to make some haste to come to that part of my story that most closely affects myself. Through newspapers, which afterwards came to hand, I

learnt that the force of the gale had been felt from Lima to Valdivia along a stretch of coast upwards of sixteen hundred miles in length, and that it had caused a known loss of nearly two hundred vessels, including a Chilian war-ship; that the whole seaboard was strown with wreckage that came ashore chiefly down between Cobijo and Huasco, and that to the westwards the hurricane was felt as far as the easternmost of the group of islands which are marked in the charts as the Low Archipelago; so that it may be said to have ravaged nearly a third of the South Pacific Ocean extending from the coast of South America westward as far as the South Sea Islands.

Nothing but Mr. Thomas's skill as a practical seaman, who knew his ship as familiarly as a rider knows the horse he has sat for months, coupled with the magnificent build and noble sea-going qualities of the *Waldershare*, could have saved the vessel. For two whole days and a night both he and I honestly believed that every next plunge she took in the tremendous seas would be her last. We neither of us

slept, never once shifted our clothes, and only left the deck to run below and swallow the food necessary to keep body and soul together. The wonder of this terrible time was that even when the gale was at its height, the sky was as clear as a summer's day sky in England; there was not a cloud to be seen, the sun shone brightly all day and the heavens were full of stars all night. The gale began and ended in this brilliant way, and yet never a fiercer gale blew in any quarter of the globe; and to feel the force of the wind, and to look at the raging sea, and then to gaze up at the beautiful sky, was a contrast that filled the mind with astonishment.

The gale, having blown itself out, left us all on a sudden on Monday, at three a.m. We had then nothing on the ship but a small main-staysail, having furled the main-topsail when the gale first struck us before it should be blown out of the bolt-ropes. The sea then went down with surprising rapidity, and soon after daybreak we had got most of the canvas set again. Fierce as the hurricane had been, it had done us

no hurt whatever ; the ship was as tight as a cork, not a spar was sprung, and when we had made sail and hauled everything taut, and washed and coiled down fore and aft, the whole ship looked as bright and smart as if she had just come out of the dock.

Nevertheless, it was our bad luck, that though we had been seventy-six days in performing so much of the voyage as had been accomplished, we were some hundreds of miles out of the track of our course ; and when I came on deck on this Monday morning at eight o'clock, and saw the sea heaving in a calm all round, and sparkling under the hot high sun with a kind of yellowish brilliance, as though we were afloat on an ocean of oil, a feeling of strong impatience seized me, a longing for the land : I was weary, weary of the eternal water-line circling us for ever, tired to death of the restless play of the deck under my feet, and of the perpetual scene of hull and spar and sail.

The truth was, I was more exhausted by our late tremendous buffeting, and the violent anxiety I had shared with Mr.

Thomas, than I was fully sensible of. Moreover, I had found another source of depression, in the indication of the barometer; the mercury had, indeed, risen, and yet, if I may so say, there was a want of buoyancy in it—it expressed a sort of hesitancy; indeed, it gave me this idea, that I might look at it in another half-hour's time and find it very low again. The mere circumstance of the sky being a bright blue, and all around us looking true Pacific weather, brought no sense of security after the gale that had blown under a heaven as brilliant as what we now had.

Still, there was no reason, even if it did come on to blow again, why we should have the wind dead on end, and why it should amount to a gale; and I owned to myself that I would rather deal with a gale that would let us hold our course for Callao than be humbugging about in this calm.

A hearty breakfast made me feel more of a man. I came on deck and found Thomas showing the passengers the position of the ship upon a chart that he had laid upon the skylight. He talked like a schoolmaster

teaching pupils geography, and it was impossible to help laughing at the way in which Espinosa hung his great nose over the chart, repeating what Mr. Thomas said in broken English, like one of a congregation following a parson reading a prayer.

Mr. Black, however, was not at all satisfied to learn that we were some hundreds of miles out of our course.

"I cannot but think, Mr. Thomas," said he, "with all daference to your better judgment, that had the sheep's head been laid towards the land, the gale would have driven us that way."

"But can't you see, Mr. Black, that the ship's head *couldn't* have been laid towards the land—or at least towards that part of it we want to make—because the hurricane was blowing direct from that quarter?" exclaimed Mr. Thomas. "I wonder that a mathematician like you can't see so simple a thing as this."

"Well, sir, as I have said, with daference, I am obliged to own that I cannot see it," replied Mr. Black. "Here, sir, you have a sheep so constructed as to sail at right

angles with the wind, and I contend, with humeelity, that had the ship's course been adjusted to the wind, and her head pointed to the land, she'd have gone that way, and the hurricane would have been powerless to stop her."

"Yes, sir," cried Thomas, warmly, "and here are you, Mr. Black, with two legs so constructed as to walk with the wind in your teeth; but if the wind is so strong as to tumble you over on your back and oblige you to throw your coat-tails over your arms and scud before it, where are you then, Mr. Black, eh, sir? What becomes of your construction and your theories, sir?"

But the obstinate Scotchman was not to be convinced; he merely shook his head, exclaiming, "Vary well, vary well; I merely give my opeenion with daference," which was the more annoying to hear, since, as I have already said, the ship's salvation was entirely owing to Thomas's practical skill; and I will go so far as to say that in my hands, or even in the hands of a better seaman than I, instead of three hundred, she might have been blown five hundred miles out of her course.

Nelly, who had left the group round the skylight, had stationed herself near the quarter-boat, and was looking very earnestly out to sea. I believed she was admiring the colour of the water as it rose and fell, the sunlight falling in silver on the slant of the swell, whilst in the hollows lay a shadow of burnished violet. Presently she came up to me.

"Will," said she, "can you see anything out there?"

I looked in the direction she pointed to, but in consequence of my sight having been weakened by the long all-night watches I had been keeping, I could see nothing.

"What do you see, Nell?" I asked.

"I fancied I saw just now a line like the mast of a ship sticking up out of the water—a long way off; but it has disappeared."

I looked again, but could make out nothing, and believing her to have been mistaken, I dismissed the subject from my mind. Meanwhile, the sea lay calm as a pond over the move of the gradually subsiding swell, and the sun shone very hot, but the air was extraordinarily sweet and

balmy, and the water like a looking-glass ; the quarter-boat that hung over the ship's side was reflected with all its colour and the sheen of the sun in it, like a boat bottom up. The counterfeit was startling : every line clear as in a picture, with not a tremor to blur it ; and if you looked over, there was your face watching you some fathoms deep in the water, that was as transparent as thin-blown bottle-green glass.

On the forecastle the watch below were busy in hanging up their clothes to dry, and all that part of the ship was soon adorned with a pleasing variety of trousers, coats, and shirts, slung in rows and dangling in such a manner as to give one a lively idea of the different sizes of the men. I called some hands aft and got the awning spread, and this made the poop luxurious. Espinosa lay smoking in an armchair ; Madam Espinosa knitted ; Mr. Black flitted about the deck, making notes in a pocket-book, stopping to bite his pencil with a frown, and evidently greatly exercised ; and Nelly sat dreaming with a book in her lap. For my part I walked the deck languidly, stopping

once or twice to say a word to Nelly, but never lingering ; for I made it a rule to keep myself as much as possible to myself during my watch, when the passengers could see me. I was somewhat depressed in spirits, but I attributed it to the anxiety I had gone through ; yet I could not rid myself of the despondency. I felt myself worrying over something that I could not come at. Sometimes I wondered if I was going to be ill, for it was impossible to imagine what it was that fretted and saddened me.

The morning stole on, and at about eleven o'clock the white water in the south became dark, and I saw that a little breeze was coming down upon us from that quarter. It was a nice little air, and darkened the water in a straight line as it came along, making it a deep blue, whilst in front of it lay an oily surface of greenish grey. It took us aback, as a gale might have done for the matter of that, for the ship lay like a log, without an inch of steerage way on her ; but in a few minutes we had got the yards trimmed, and the water began to tinkle past us.

We had been holding on in this way for about twenty minutes, when a man who had come out of the foretop, and was standing midway on the rigging, looking away on the starboard bow, with his hand shading his eyes, sung out, "There's a wreck away yonder, sir."

On this Nelly left her chair, and coming to where I stood, looked for a little while, and, pointing with her finger, exclaimed, "There it is, Will. That's the same thing I saw before. It is like a pole sticking up."

I rubbed my eyes, but still I could not see, and, much annoyed, I went for the glass, and then it was plain enough. I saw two masts erect in the water, both with square yards on them; but, so far as I could make out, the foremast consisted only of a lower mast and half a topmast, with a quantity of confused rigging and spars hanging about it, whilst the other mast was complete, even to the royal yard.

"Can you see anything of her hull?" I called to the man, who still stood in the fore-rigging, looking her way.

"No, sir; she looks hull down up here, sir."

"Not hull down behind the horizon, surely!" I exclaimed to Nelly, whilst I took another squint through the glass.

"What ees it, Mistaire Lee?" demanded Espinosa, leaving his chair.

"Why, to all appearance, the wreck of a vessel," I answered; "but we shall see more of her presently."

The pace of the *Waldershare* was so slow under the light air, which even now was growing fainter, that three-quarters of an hour elapsed before the object we had sighted could be clearly made out by the glass. It then proved to be the wreck of a brig, with nothing of her hull visible above water but her bulwarks, with a raised cabin aft painted white and a small galley forward. So far as I could distinguish, she had lost her jibboom and carried away her fore-top-mast, that hung down supported by the rigging, leaving the topsail yard on the cap. Her sides, like those of our own ship, were painted green, and this was the reason, perhaps, why we had not sighted the hull, or that portion of it that was visible, sooner.

By noon she was distant about one and a

half miles. The little air that had been stirring about our loftier canvas now completely died out, and once more the sea took its aspect of burnished surface, very softly heaving in quiet folds.

I went below after taking sights, but not to sleep, for my restlessness and uneasiness were even stronger upon me now than before, and to this was added a sort of nervous excitement. Attributing my bad spirits to the wear and worry of the past week, I was mortified to think that a man so robust as I should be beaten in mere physical endurance by so small and slender a figure as Thomas, who was as brisk as a bird, and had made nothing of a spell of four and twenty hours on deck in a hurricane strong enough to blow the eyes out of one.

I lay in my bunk reading until the luncheon bell rang, and then got up and went to the table. I found Nelly full of the wreck; and, indeed, the others could find nothing else to talk about.

"I cannot help thinking, Mr. Lee," said Nelly (she called me by that name when

others were present, though she sometimes made a grimace when she pronounced it), "that there may be people on board that vessel; and, do you know, I have been begging Mr. Thomas to send a boat to her, just to satisfy my curiosity, and he has promised to do so if this calm lasts."

"But what makes you think there are people aboard of her?" I asked.

"It's a mere fancy, I own: but suppose there *should* be people in the little white house on deck—dying, perhaps, or too weak to crawl out and make signs to us—how dreadful it would be to sail away and leave them!"

She looked at me wistfully and longingly with her fine eyes; it was just as if she had said, "Oh, Will, I *may* be right: isn't it our duty to send a boat?"

"The question to me is," said Mr. Black, "whether by sending a boat to the vessel we should not be losing time if the wind got up?"

"Oh, Mr. Black, what is the loss of a few hours, even a few days, compared to saving a human life!" exclaimed Nelly.

"True," said Mr. Black, reflectively; "true, Miss Maitland. That's a reflection that deserves consideration."

"But suppose, if there *are* people on board, they should be dead?" said Madam Espinosa.

"Why, then we should know they are dead," I answered.

"Yes, but you wouldn't bring the dead bodies away, would you?" she cried.

"Perhaps not," said I.

"Zere have been two daid body alreaty," said Espinosa, holding up two fingers. "My wife is right—more we do not want."

However, Nelly seemed to think there might be people aboard, and kept on saying there could be no harm in sending a boat, and talked so earnestly about it, that I said I would go on deck and have a look at the vessel, and see what Mr. Thomas thought. So, when I had finished my lunch, I went on the poop, and Nelly and the others came after me; for the truth was, our conversation had kindled our curiosity, and I was as willing that a boat should be sent as any of them.

The moment Thomas saw me, he dived for his lunch—no man ever loved eating better, though he was no glutton—and I took the glass and very leisurely had a long look at the brig. Lying within a mile and a half of us, the glass brought her close alongside, so to speak; and I now perceived that her cargo was timber, her deck-load standing nearly flush with the rail of her bulwarks, and that she was sunk to within an inch or two of her scuppers, her bulwarks being hove clear above the water. So far as I could judge by examining her thus, she appeared a vessel of about two hundred tons burden. She had one boat hanging at the starboard davits literally broken in halves, the keel amidships gaping open like the beak of a bird, but the falls on this side were overhauled and the blocks buried in the water, and her long-boat was gone.

She appeared to have been a taut little brig, by the stay of her masts and the general character of her gear and spars; her lower rigging had a wide spread, like a ten-gun brig's, and her tops were also large for her size, and her topsail and lower yards

were long, heavy, and powerful spars. The canvas lay furled snugly enough on the yards, and the only injuries which she had sustained up aloft were the loss of her fore-topmast, half of which hung up and down with the royal-masthead resting on the deck, and her jibboom, of which no fragment remained. She was full of water, and was only kept afloat by the timber in her; but though she rose and sank to the swell, her high and very solid bulwarks kept the run of the sea clear of her decks, and full as she was, yet there was a certain spring in her very wallowing that made me fancy the time was when nothing lighter than that same half-sunk and stupefied little brig had ever danced and frolicked over the ocean wave.

Nelly and the others stood around me whilst I examined the wreck, and when I put the glass down, my sweetheart wanted to know if there were any signs of life to be seen?

"No," I answered; "if there are any people aboard of her they are in one of the houses on deck."

"But do you think there *are* any people on board?" Mr. Black asked.

"How can I tell without going to look, Mr. Black? Miss Maitland's idea is there may be one or more persons dying in the cabin yonder, or too exhausted by suffering, or by hunger and thirst, to crawl out and show themselves; and although I think that the chances are fifty to one against our discovering anybody living, yet, as there are no signs of a breeze, I do not know why we should not lower a boat. What you have to consider is, yonder vessel may have been knocking about as you see her for weeks, for she looks to be a strongly built craft, and would take even more than the hurricane we have experienced to break her up; in which case, if there are people aboard of her they may be starving to death."

"Well, then, if that's the case we should be acting like pagans not to send a boat," said Madam Espinosa; and that was the general opinion when Mr. Thomas came on deck.

Nelly immediately began with him, repeating my arguments. He laughed and

looked around the horizon, exclaiming, "What do you think, Mr. Lee? is she worth boarding?"

"Why, I might jump into one of the boats with a couple of hands, just to satisfy the ladies," I answered, smiling at Nelly.

"Very well," said he; and hailing the boatswain, he sung out to him to send some hands aft to man and lower the starboard quarter-boat. I was in the act of getting into the boat when Nelly, who had disappeared in a violent hurry, came running up to me with a soda-water bottle containing brandy, which I suppose the steward had filled for her. "Should you find anybody ill you may require this," said she, thrusting the bottle into the pocket of my coat. Then, seeing the men grinning, she blushed a deep scarlet; but Mr. Thomas came to her rescue with, "That shows real foresight, Miss Maitland; but it is not every lady who thinks of poor Jack as you do;" on which the boat was lowered into the water and we shoved off.

A couple of hands pulled the boat. She was heavy enough to need four had there

been any wind, but it was so calm and breathless that a boy might have sculled her; so calm and so breathless, indeed, that when, being a few lengths from the ship, I turned to look at her, I beheld one of the fairest sights of reflected beauty that placid water ever offered to the eyes. Such was the transparency, or rather I should say the reflecting power of the surface of the deep, that the *Waldershare* seemed fixed in a vast sheet of looking-glass grooved where she lay to receive her beautifully moulded hull, leaving exposed the swell of her sides and the delicate curves of her bows and stern, but duplicating in its steel-like depths with exquisite accuracy every portion of her—from the green bend at the silvery edge of the water up to her royal-masthead—so that, from the point at which I looked at her, there lay just beneath the ship the perfect form and figure of an inverted vessel, with the sails gleaming like ivory as they hung in the delicate blue, and every glint of the sun, and the fiery lines in her masts, and her glittering gilt figure-head, with the white jibs suspended without a swim or quiver of the

perfect outlines, reproduced with an added glow or gleam of colour such as one sees in the reflection of an object in a soap-bubble, or on the silver plate of a daguerreotype. Once, when she rolled, she threw a few ripples from her side, in which her lovely inverted image quivered as if a haze of heat had tarnished for a moment the polished surface of the mirror; and then the picture brightened forth again and hung so steadily, that no painted ship on canvas, with its outline hanging beneath it, could be more quiet.

"She looks a real beauty," said the man nearest to me, as though speaking to himself.

"Hallo!" I exclaimed, facing the wreck and looking to the right of her: "yonder's a breeze of wind, or I am much mistaken;" for the edge of the horizon all that way was dark.

"Only another catspaw, I reckon, sir," said the man in the bow, half turning his head, but without looking. "I allow there's not much wind left in the sky arter last week's job."

"Give way cheerily, men, and let's board that hooker," I sung out. "I don't fancy there'll be much to see."

Suddenly we were hailed from the *Waldershare*.

"'Vast rowing!" I called out, for the sound of the oars in the thole-pins prevented me from hearing. I stood up.

"Hallo!" I shouted back.

"D'ye see that breeze coming down yonder?" I could hear Thomas sing out, standing on the hencoop near the davits, and his small voice stealing along the smooth surface of the water in a very thread of sound.

"Ay, ay!" I shouted; "we'll be back before it can hurt us. Now then, my lads!" And once more the two men bent their backs to the oars. Before we had reached the brig, however, the breeze was all around us; it took the *Waldershare* aback, but she hauled her foreyards round, and when she had filled, backed her main-topsail and lay waiting for us. Indeed, the breeze had come down rather more rapidly than might have been expected, and the men began to

find the big quarter-boat so heavy on their oars, that had it not been for Nelly's extreme anxiety that the wreck should be boarded, I would have dropped the errand and returned to the ship.

The brig smoothed and sheltered the water for some considerable distance under her lee, and the nearer we drew to her the easier it became to impel the boat. The water under her, being unruffled, was as transparent as the rest of the sea had been in the calm, and in the cool, green, translucent depths the whole of her submerged hull, from her forefoot down to the bottom of her stern post, was perfectly visible each time she rolled away from us, showing indeed a very pretty model, with peculiarly fine and graceful lines, and sheathed with new metal.

Alongside of her, and with her gunwales just below the surface of the water, was a boat, still slinging at the davits, or at least with the fall-blocks hooked in her bottom. When I had first noticed these falls drooping into the water, I supposed that they had been overhauled in order to lower the boat, and that she was gone; but now that we

were arrived close to the vessel, I observed that the tackles were jammed in the davit-blocks, and that the boat, having been lowered to the water's edge, had filled before they could unhook her; and the brig, in settling down to the point at which she now lay, had submerged the boat alongside as far as the falls would let her go.

There was the body of a man lying under the thwarts, which prevented the corpse from floating out. The water was so clear, as I have said, that it gave an extraordinary sharpness to the features and outline of the body as though it lay under a brilliant diminishing glass; yet there was enough disturbance caused in the water on either side of the brig by the breeze, that was freshening into a small wind, to agitate the depths into which we looked, the result of which was to give several changes of expression to the face of the dead man, and to make the action of the countenance so life-like that he seemed to be speaking.

On getting alongside the wreck I told the men to remain in the boat, and jumped aboard with the end of the painter in my

hand, which I hitched around a belaying-pin. I knew enough of timber to see at a glance that the vessel's cargo consisted of New Zealand pine planks—at least, the planks on deck were of this wood—and they stood up to a considerable height against the bulwarks, which were very high and solid for so small a vessel, being at least five feet from the water ways. The sea had capsized and tumbled them forward, but amidships they still remained stowed, and offered a surface very nearly as smooth as a deck. The deck-cabin was right aft, and the end of these planks came to within a yard of the entrance to the house, leaving the deck on either side of it and all about the wheel clear. There were four little windows on each side the deck-house, with a door facing forward, and the top of it, that was led to by a flight of steps, was protected by an iron railing, so that a very good look-out could be kept from it, and it was as commanding in its way as a poop.

The cabin door was shut, and I opened it—not without a feeling of awe and expectation, for Nelly's belief that there were live

persons aboard possessed me strongly, and the sight of the dead man in the boat alongside had not a little sharpened the feeling.

The cabin was divided by a stout bulkhead running fore and aft it. This bulkhead partitioned off on the starboard side three little berths or cabins, each having a low door which obliged me to stoop to enter it, and each fitted with a bunk, though in the aftermost cabin there was slung a hammock. The other part of the house, that on the port or left-hand side, was a living room, having a long mahogany table that slid up and down on stanchions, with several stout wooden chairs around it.

However, without paying much attention to these details, I entered the cabins one after the other, looked into the bunks, felt the hammock, and satisfied myself that there was nobody living or dead in that part of the brig. I then went forward, noticing as I hastened that the wind had freshened into a good breeze, and that the little runners were tumbling against the weather bulwarks of the vessel with a brisk play of foam. But had it blown twice as

hard I should have felt no uneasiness, for the water was still smooth enough, the *Waldershare* to leeward, and the wind would run the boat down to her almost without requiring us to use the oars.

The house just abaft the foremast was, as I had supposed, no more than the caboose, or galley, and nobody was in it. The deck-load covered the fore hatch, but just beyond, the deck was clear as far as the bows of the vessel, and in the middle was the fore-scuttle. There was evidently, then, a forecastle below for the men, and I kneeled down and looked into it; but it was pitch dark, though I could just catch a glimpse of the sheen of water as the wreck rolled.

The bows of the vessel being higher out of water than the rest of her, and as, in consequence, the water in the forecastle was some two or three feet below the coamings of the hatch, I thought there might be a bare chance of some one being alive in a hammock slung close against the deck, or in one of the upper tier of bunks. I accordingly called out, "Is there anybody below there?" but no answer was returned, and I

hailed three times, listening with eager attention for any murmur or groan that might follow; but all was as still as death, save now and again the gurgle of the water as the hull swayed.

I lingered longer here than my judgment should have permitted me, listening and wondering if anybody could be alive down there, though insensible or too weak to speak, and debating whether I could do any good by descending the steps to the water's edge, and groping and feeling about me as far as my arm would extend. However, it looked a dreadful hole to go even but a few steps down into in the dark, and perhaps only to touch a hammock and to feel a dead man in it; so, after reasoning a while, I rose and came away to get into the boat.

I went to the belaying-pin to which I had made the painter fast, with the intention of hauling the boat alongside, when, to my inexpressible consternation, I found that the line had slipped over the pin and had gone away overboard. I sprang on to the bulwark, and looking over, discovered that the boat was adrift and was above fifty feet to leeward,

and that one of the men was dozing in the stern-sheets, whilst the other sat on the amidship thwart, absorbed in the contents of a little volume that he held close to his nose.

I immediately halloed at the top of my voice, on which they both started up with gestures of alarm, and after looking about them hurriedly seized their oars. The boat's head was pointed towards the ship, and the breeze had caught her and was driving her to leeward at a rate that every moment alarmingly increased her distance from the brig. The man pulling the bow oar strained every nerve to get her head round against the sea (that was now all of a wobble) and the wind, whilst the other backed water; but just when they had got her beam broad to the wind, the fellow in the bow suddenly went head over heels into the bottom of the boat, and as in falling he jerked his arms up, I observed that only the stump of the oar remained in his hands—in other words, he had snapped the oar in halves. The boat's head instantly fell off.

At this moment I recollected that we had

shoved off with only two oars in the boat, owing to the other oars having been sent forward to be scraped, and as the men had but one oar, I knew that if my salvation was to depend upon the boat reaching the brig again I was a doomed man. However, my momentary consternation had passed, and recollecting myself, I shouted to the men to get aboard the ship as fast as they could, and return to the brig with more oars and more men. They heard me plain enough, and yet what must the fools do but throw the sound oar over the stern and, getting the boat's head towards the brig, begin to scull.

I shouted to them again, stamping my foot with anger and impatience, but they would not give over. One of them called back, "Hold on, sir! we think we shall be able to manage it," though they might as well have attempted to take the brig in tow, for every moment they were losing ground, and every moment the breeze was strengthening; and, to make matters worse, right away down in the quarter whence the breeze was blowing a whole squadron of clouds

was coming up. . They were white now with the sun upon them, but they were big and woolly and full, with a windy shimmer in their skirts, and astern of them was a long low line of white cloud, so that all that way the weather began to look squally enough to make me feel desperately anxious.

Seeing the two men still madly struggling to scull the boat against the increasing sea, an idea occurred to me. I sprang on to the bulwark, and looking into the boat, that hung with her back broken at the davits, I found three oars in her, one of which I seized, and running with it to the other side of the deck, I darted it, as I would a harpoon, with all my force towards the boat. The wind helped it, and it fell some distance to leeward of the brig, but a long way this side the boat; and now, no sooner had I thrown it than I saw that it was the maddest thing I could have done, for the men would try to reach the oar, which they would be no more able to do than reach the brig, and this would prolong their useless struggle against the wind and sea, when, had they had one grain of sense, they would have steered the boat down to

the ship that lay right dead to leeward and that could not be missed, and got help, and rowed back to me whilst the sea was yet fit for a boat.

They continued their struggle for some time, but finding that all their labour only resulted in their drifting further and further away from the brig and the oar, and probably being fatigued, and judging the state of mind I was in by my cries and gesticulations, and also no doubt beginning to fear that if they were not sharp they would not be able to fetch the *Waldershare*, they turned the boat's head round and, to my inexpressible relief, sculled away for the ship.

My whole attention was now directed to the movements of the vessel. She was too far off to enable me to see what they were doing aboard, but I every moment expected to perceive the starboard quarter boat lowered and pulling towards me; and why this was not done I could not conceive, unless they were puzzled by our movements, and imagined I had some motive in stopping on the wreck. But would not they see that the men had lost an oar by their sculling

the boat? or would they believe that the men sculled to save the trouble of pulling, and because the wind and sea were running them down to the ship as fast as their oars could?

By this time the wind was whistling over my head shrilly, and the sea was tumbling in a way to heave a nasty lump of green water now and again over the weather bulwark. The advance guard of cloud had risen with surprising rapidity and was now overhead, the sky was all heavy with passing clouds from the horizon to the zenith, and what looked to be a heavy squall was coming up hand over fist along with the wind and darkening the sea in the south.

The boat danced upon the surges in a manner that made her more often hidden than visible; so far as I might judge she had half a mile to go to fetch the ship. Aboard the *Waldershare* the wind was making itself felt, and with her topsail to the mast she heeled over in such a way as to expose half the metal on her bottom. On a sudden and all in a hurry they began to shorten sail: all three royals and top-

gallant sails were clewed up at once, and the flying jib hauled down ; and the rigging was presently dotted with little black figures. In a few minutes she took in her staysails and outer jib, brailed up the mizzen and furled the crossjack.

I could not now discern the boat, though she was no longer the object of my anxiety ; my whole attention was centred in the ship. What would she do ? There was such a topple of sea rising as would make it impossible for any boat to row to windward, and the only way for them to rescue me from my perilous position was to brace up sharp, make a short board to windward, heave to abreast of the wreck and drop a boat down, then run to leeward and receive the boat, as had been done in the case of the *Jessie Jackson*.

All this time I remained calm and collected, and do not remember that I was sensible of any great uneasiness. Indeed, what had happened had all come about too suddenly to give my mind time, so to speak, to reason upon my situation ; and besides, I had the utmost confidence in Mr. Thomas's

seamanship, and had no doubt that he would find some means to take me off the wreck. What troubled me most was the alarm that Nelly would feel, and her self-reproaches for having been the cause of my making this unhappy adventure. But I also knew that Thomas would not let her grow too despondent, and I kept on saying to myself, "In a short while she and I will be talking about this, and making light of it, as another picturesque incident of our voyage."

The *Waldershare* swung her mainyards, and, just as I expected, braced them sharp up and headed on a line that made an angle with the brig. By this I judged she had picked up her boat, and it made me feel more satisfied to think that they knew by this time how it happened that I was left on the wreck. I gazed at her so intently that I never thought of looking to windward, but seeing her haul up the mainsail and let go the mizzen-topsail halliards, I turned my head and saw the sky all black and the sea all white with a furious squall. Before I could have sung out it was aboard. It came first in a sheet of rain that blew along in a

smoke ; the water boiled and frothed under the mere weight and fury of this deluge ; the wind howled with the voice of a tornado, and there was one, but only one, sharp glare of lightning, followed by a loud crack of thunder.

I watched the smoke of the rain, myself soaked to the skin, discolouring the blue of the sky, until it reached the *Waldershare*, when she vanished, and all around there was darkness like evening. I now recalled how my mind had misgiven me on looking at the barometer before I quitted the *Waldershare*. Had it fallen since ? What was it indicating now ? I believe I would have given two years of my life to have known. Indeed, the gloom, the howling of the wind, and the rising seas, which were beginning to pour over the bulwarks of the submerged hull like breakers on a shore, were doing their work in my mind, and from that hour I date the frightful time of suspense I was now to endure.

In order to escape the water that poured over and along the decks every time the hull rolled, I mounted to the top of the

deck-house, where, indeed, my footing was safe, though I was exposed to the full fury of the wind and the rain. What with the darkness and the haze of rain and spray lashed up out of the sea, and swept upwards and forwards by the wind, I could not see further than the length of the brig around me. There likewise seemed every prospect of another gale blowing ; at all events, we were in the right seas for sudden and violent gales ; and when I reflected that should anything approaching the gale we had recently experienced arise, the *Waldershare* would certainly be blown out of sight, and that between me and the bottom of the sea was only the almost sunken hull of a vessel which another tempest might tear to pieces, my heart sank, the whole horror and peril of my situation rushed upon me. I thought of Nelly, and was unmanned, and hid my face in my hands, while the rain poured through my fingers, and the heavy, dreadful rolling of the water-logged wreck kept the floods upon the deck boiling and seething against the bulwarks.

However, I was a sailor and used to

danger, and, being young, I could not long remain a stranger to hope. I struggled with my despair and presently mastered it, and remembering the brandy that Nelly had put in my pocket, I drew the cork and swallowed a dram, which relieved me from the sickly sensation of cold that was caused by the furious wind pouring through my streaming clothes.

I pulled out my watch and found it hard upon four o'clock, and what may seem strange in a man circumstanced as I was, I wound up my watch, reasoning that I might forget to do so later on, and then it would stop, and I should be without time. Though I reasoned, I say, yet I believe the action in the first place was mechanical too; which I think is worth noting, as showing that one has instincts which forebode events and provide for them without any operation of the brain, or at all events without any sensible concurrence of the thinking part of the mind. Be this as it may, I gave a violent start when I found it to be four o'clock, for that would leave me only a very few hours longer of sunlight, and now God

knows I was beginning to dread the approach of night, as though I was to find my grave in it.

The squall lasted for at least half an hour, during all which time the rain fell in torrents. The wind drove it all aslant; but even had there been no rain, the air would have been as thick as mud with the haze of the spray from the sea, that was now breaking heavily against the side of the brig, and blowing over in clouds like dust. It then grew lighter, and the horizon widened, and I saw a rift of blue sky to windward; at the same moment a whole gale of wind came thundering down that swept the sea of the rain and the gloom, and cleared it like magic down to the water-line, where I saw the *Waldershare*, about two points before the beam of the brig—in other words, right away down to leeward—as dead that way as she could well be, between four and five miles distant, having evidently put her helm up to receive the first shock of the squall: and there she lay, with her head at south-west, under a close-reefed maintopsail rising and falling, and, whether

ratching* or not, making, as I guessed, such leeway as must drive her out of sight before sunset unless she made more sail.

My anxiety at the sight of her rose to a passion that was like at one moment to drive me frantic. I looked to windward. The gale that had blown on the previous week had come with a bright clear sky, but this wind was storming under a sky like marble, all white and grey and veined with blue, and looking a desperately hard and stony sky. I could not in the least imagine what the weather would be by staring at it; but this I knew, that unless the *Waldershare* could manage to ratch to windward she stood the chance of losing sight of the brig in the long night, and then God knows what the end of it all would be. Now and again the sun shone through the rifts, and threw a dazzling beam upon the sea; but these glimpses of splendour only appeared to give a new edge and spite to the wind, that had settled into a heavy, steady blow, and every sea that ran poured in a deluge

* Reaching, or fore-reaching; that is, forging ahead when close-hauled.—W. C. R.

of sparkling green water right over the hull.

As yet the top of the deck-house on which I stood remained untouched, though, to guard myself against the fall of a higher sea than the rest, I took a turn round my waist with a rope's end and secured myself to the iron railing. Moreover, the main-top still offered me a refuge should the seas grow greater; though whether the toppling Pacific surges which were grinding the sunken and helpless hull among them would not presently rend her in pieces, and scatter her bones all abroad, was more than I dared venture to speculate upon.

All this while my eyes remained glued on the *Waldershare*. I dreaded to take my gaze off her, lest when I looked again she should be gone; and this fancy will show to what degree my mind was affected by my peril. I wondered whether she would be able to see the wreck amid the haze of spray that smoked over her through the constant beating of the seas, and I kept on asking myself, "What will Thomas do? He *must* not let his ship drift to leeward like that.

Were it blowing ten times as hard, he ought to be sailor enough to know how to hold his ground near me and keep me in sight!" And then I considered, what would I do if I were in his place? and sometimes I would shout out and shake my hand at the ship, for although I knew what I said and did, I had no control over my passions; and not only my being exposed to the wind and the ceaseless lashing of spray, wet through and with the war of the elements thundering in my ears, in a manner to deafen me and make my head crazy, but the sight of the green seas pouring in mountains over the wreck, and leaping up in a play of luminous spears and pinnacles and points which the wind shattered into spume that blew whizzing into the air, was enough to deprive me of all nerve and make me act like a child.

About twenty minutes after the horizon had cleared, I saw them loose the fore-top-sail aboard the *Waldershare* and sheet it home. My heart leapt up at this sight, for I supposed they had made out the brig to windward, and that Thomas meant to drive

the ship to the southward, let it blow as it might. Shortly afterwards they boarded the fore-tack. This raised a smother of foam at her bow, and even at that distance I could perceive, when she rose to the sea, the water strike her side and flash in a quiver and veil of fog right over her. Close-hauled as she was, in order to keep her full and ratching they would require to give her an easier helm, and although she was a heavy ship, yet I knew from experience that under her present canvas, and with the trend of the sea, she would not make less than three and a half points leeway, and every point would tell against me as diminishing her chance of coming to windward of the brig before the darkness fell.

There was a whole lifetime of anguish and bitterness of spirit in my heart as I watched her. There was not a sailor aboard of her but would know that I was in a position of the most desperate peril; and many of them, I have no doubt, imagined that should they ever succeed in boarding the wreck I should not be found on her, for

few would believe I should long be able to keep my footing on a hull over which the sea was foaming as though she had been a sunken rock. It was harder to see to windward than to leeward; and therefore, although I could make out the ship plainly enough, yet I doubted whether they would be able to distinguish me, even with the glass, amid the spray that veiled the deck-house. I thought of Nelly and the misery of her mind as she strove in vain to discern with her bare sight the masts of the submerged hull on which I, who was so dear to her, sat dreading that every moment would bring me my death.

For the first time for many minutes I removed my eyes from the ship to look to windward to see what chance there was of this gale abating, and I humbly think it was God's will I should turn my eyes in that direction at that particular moment; for there, about a quarter of a mile from the hull, was a monstrous sea rearing its dark, unbroken head like a mountain among hills, bearing down with frightful speed upon the brig. Knowing how that weight of water

would serve me, and uttering a loud involuntary cry, as if every instinct in my nature believed it too late, and in its passion had forced the cry from me, I threw the rope that lashed me from my waist and with one bound gained the main rigging, up which I sprang. I was just in time, and my life was saved. The sea, standing ten feet higher than the bulwark, rolled sheer over the brig, burying her as high as half-way up her mainmast. The crash and thunder of the shock cannot be expressed; it tore half the deck-load out of her, and I saw the white pines gleaming in the bottle-green and polished curl of the mighty comber as they went up and over into the sea beyond. The broken boat hanging at the davits was swept away as though it had been a chip of wood. I thought the hull had gone to pieces; she rolled on to her beam ends, she buried both her lower yards to within a few feet of the slings, and such was the declination of her masts that I, standing on the ratlines just below the main-top, sprawled flat upon my chest against the shrouds, almost, indeed, as though I lay upon a horizontal surface.

She righted with her decks full of foam, amid which the loosened pines flashed to and fro, some leaping overboard as though darted by a hand. I got into the top, where I lashed myself securely and took another draught of brandy. Here, being to leeward of the head of the mainmast, I found myself somewhat sheltered, and sitting myself down, I remained watching the movements of the *Waldershare*.

They had now got the main-trysail on her and the inner jib; they had also set the mizzen-topsail. It was as much as I could do to make out this canvas, and then only when the sunshine streamed on her; though, being now a good height above the deck, I had a good sight of her, and my view was less clouded by the spray. Presently she hoisted her main top-gallant sail. All this canvas meant that Thomas was driving her ferociously, and I watched her passing like a cloud along the rugged water-line, gradually fining down in the westwards until I lost sight of her hull and only her canvas glimmered like a pale star.

So far as her movements were concerned

I felt no particular uneasiness; for, miserable and bitterly despondent as I was, I could judge that Thomas was right in choosing to make a long board to the westwards in order to fetch the brig on the starboard tack by another board, sooner than attempt to beat to windward against such a sea as was now running in short tacks. Yet one risk it was reasonable I should be quicker to see than he, and that was that, the night being close at hand, he stood to lose sight of the brig altogether by holding on to the port tack too long; and therefore I sat watching the pale shadow of her sails with an intensity that made me sick and dizzy, until the horizon swayed up and down as if the whole deep were composed of a single wave, until a darkness was begotten to my sight by the steadfastness of my gaze that affrighted me into a quick and bewildered glance around, for I believed the darkness real, and that the night I so bitterly dreaded was come indeed.

It still blew a strong gale, but the wind no longer came thundering down in puffs. To windward the sky looked brighter, but it

was marbled with the stony clouds from horizon to horizon, and there was a hardness in the character of the light and in the clear-cut running of the water-line, and the green of the water had a wintry sharpness. I was too experienced a sailor not to read these signs aright; they meant that the gale was not going to blow itself out in an hour, though no worse than what was happening now might follow.

I drew out my watch and found that it wanted twenty minutes to six. In about an hour and a half the sun would have set, and in these latitudes the twilight was of such brief duration that it was not to be reckoned. It turned me sick to reflect upon the rapidity with which the last hour and a half had flown by, but I would not despair. I knew that whilst the *Waldershare* held together Mr. Thomas would keep by me until the weather moderated sufficiently to let him send a boat, and I comforted myself as well as I could by reflecting that before he lost sight of me in the darkness he would carefully take the bearings of the wreck, and by dead reckoning or by observation determine

her position, and so in the morning pick her up again easily; for the brig's drift would be small, and he would know how much to allow for it.

Yet the prospect of passing a night on the wreck was unspeakably dreadful to me; and I prayed God that if I was not to be released before next day, the wind and sea might go down, so that I could take the shelter of the cabin, for even now I felt numbed and cramped to the bones, with the force of the wind up in the main-top blowing into my flesh through my wet clothes. The *Waldershare* was still in sight, and remaining so—nay, even growing a more defined form upon the horizon; whence I judged that she had gone about and was heading my way. She was indeed only a pale blurr upon the distant sea, like the tip of the white wing of a sea-bird projected above the water-line, and she might have been standing east or west, instead of to where the brig lay, for all I could have told, had I not, by foreseeing her movements, clearly understood that she had stayed, and meant to fetch

the wreck by a board on the starboard tack.

I considered how her head would lie, how close she would be able to bear up for me; and this made me turn to observe how the wind was blowing, when, to my unspeakable dismay, I found it had hauled, even whilst I had been speculating on the course of the *Waldershare*, at least four points to the eastwards; so that if the ship held on to the starboard tack, she would arrive almost at the very point from which she had started, whilst if she went about, and got her port tack aboard, she would haul out to the southward, and in either case be a long way to leeward of me.

This was a dreadful blow, and made me almost mad, for now it was quite certain I was doomed to remain on the wreck for the night; and I buried my head between my arms, and yielded like a woman to my grief and despair.

So in this way the time wore on. I felt neither hunger nor thirst. The roar of the seas as they foamed over the deck below, and the howling of the wind, were always in

my ears, and now that I knew that I was to pass the night on the brig, the sight of the ship—a pale gliding speck far down in the north-west—gave me no longer any hope; it was only like an illusion of the sight which my heart had detected and was cruelly fretting over; it only served to increase the desolation of the world of waters which foamed for leagues and leagues around me, and to give an edge to the horror with which I contemplated the coming of the night.

The sun went down, and flushed the clouds with pink to the very zenith; its light shone red upon the dancing seas of the horizon over the stern of the brig, and the cloud-like sail in the north-west turned as red as the canvas of a smack, and quivered like a flame on the hard, dark-green tumble of the deep: and as the sunset paled in the west, the beacon on which my eyes were fixed expired, and the gradual gloom came creeping up over the frothing ocean, until the horizon melted in the sky, and the outline of the sunken hull below me was visible only in the flashing of the foam,

and the greenish glare of the phosphorus as the surges poured over and over it, whilst the stars winked hazily in the rifts overhead, and the air was filled with the desolate storming of the gale and the weary, eternal crashing of warring waters.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LONELY DEEP.

WHEN the darkness first fell and the *Waldershare* faded in the gloom, I felt like a man that had been drugged with an opiate, quite stupefied and silly, and there were moments when I could not bring myself to believe that my present condition was indeed a reality. I said to myself, "It will all pass presently, and then I shall be looking back and exclaiming, How life-like was that vision!" But happily this confusion of mind did not last long—indeed, it was a kind of madness, and had it stayed it would have become a downright madness; and I honestly believe that the clearance was caused by my doing what I did but too seldom—I mean by praying: for I knelt me down in the top and most passionately and

heartily prayed God not only to save my life but to spare my reason; and I prayed for my sweetheart too, and that God would comfort her heart during our separation, and that He would bring us together again.

My prayer being said, I felt less lonely and more calm in my mind; and if any sailor who reads this should ever find himself in such another situation of peril as I was in, let him look up to God and pray heartily, and be satisfied that he is heard, whatever comes of it. I speak from experience. I knew what that prayer did for me; how it was like talking to a friend, and having a hand to hold on to; and how much more of a man I was after than I was before it.

I now began to reckon up my situation, and first I had very little doubt that the hull of the brig was sound, and would stand this and even another gale. Being, as I reckoned, chokeful of the pine planks, she was like a solid piece of timber, and she stood less chance of being bruised by the worrying of the sea by being sunk, and yielding without resistance to every motion

of the waves, than had she floated on her bottom. So I had no fear that the brig would not hold together that night, more especially as even now the wind showed some signs of abating, though it was still blowing heavily; and this conviction prodigiously comforted me.

However, until the sea fell calm I should not be able to leave the top, for not only was the main-deck afloat as high as the bulwarks, but the waves repeatedly broke in whole green seas, as they are called (although they were as black as ink in the darkness, and heavily streaked with tremulous lines of phosphorus), over the deck-house, and there was no portion of the deck on which I should have been able to keep my footing for an instant. Had it not been for the brandy, I believe I should have fallen insensible, if not have died outright of exhaustion; for no words can express the suffering caused by the booming and howling of the wind as it met in my ears around the head of the mast, under the lee of which I had secured myself, with the lacing of the spray which

the sea sometimes flung as high as the cross-trees over my head, and the giddy and sickening motion of the swaying mast, that waved from side to side like a pendulum, but at an angle of sometimes as much as 50°, and not regularly, but in swift headlong jerks, so that I should have been pitched out of the top into the black and roaring water over and over again if I had not lashed myself firmly to the mast.

I frequently strained my eyes all along the western and northern horizon where the *Waldershare* should be, but there was nothing to be seen—no, not so much as a star, for what few stars there were shone dimly in the windy rifts overhead; and the horizon was as black as the heavy wind charged with spray and the dark night could make it, and even when a sea broke to leeward of the hull of the brig, the run of its foam was speedily swallowed up in the darkness.

At last, but at what hour I do not know—for whether the time went quickly or slowly I could not guess, not being able to see the face of my watch—I fell asleep, and I

believe that my head dropped forward and I fell asleep instantly. And it was no wonder that my slumber was more like death than sleep, for out of a hundred hours of great and wearing anxiety, I had not snatched more than five or six of repose, and what I had gone through since I had quitted the deck of the *Waldershare* was an extra strain that broke nature down. I must have looked like a corpse as I squatted in that swaying top, with my hands fallen down and my legs along the planking, and my back resting against the mast, and my head lolling forward. More than once had I dropped asleep in the main-top of a large ship, but then the night was quiet, the breeze steady; and the sails full and still, with only a soft and cradle-like motion of the hull; but now there was a hellish uproar all around, and the very hull that supported me was, as I may say, sunk below the surface of the water, and the rolling of it was a terrible swinging to and fro, with sharp, dislocating jerks which made the shrouds shriek out like ringing harp-strings hauled suddenly taut; and yet

never a baby slept more profoundly and peacefully on its mother's breast than did I up in that top; and when I awoke, the dawn was grey, the gale had broken, and all in the west and south the sky was clear and the stars shining.

I awoke, I say, but I was so amazed and astounded to find myself lashed to the top of a mast, with a sunken hull rolling beneath me, that had it not been for the rope around my body I must assuredly have rolled over the edge of the top. I rubbed my eyes; my memory seemed to have deserted me altogether; I tried to rise, but I could not stir my legs, which were numbed into mere logs of wood by the wind and wet, and their being kept in one posture the whole while I slept. However, all that had passed came back to me; and after chafing and rubbing my legs for upwards of ten minutes, I got the blood to run in them, and I then stood up.

My first thought was for the ship. In the hard pale grey of the dawn the horizon all round was as black as a ruled line of India ink, but not a single shadow nor form

of any kind broke the continuity of the circle. So far as the imperfect light permitted me to see, the brig was the only object on that ocean for leagues and leagues. Nevertheless, I could not bring my mind to credit that the *Waldershare* was not somewhere within the focus of my eyes, and that she would not heave in sight when the dawn brightened. I cast myself adrift, and, with much labour and pain—for I found myself desperately stiff and weak in the limbs—I clambered as high as the cross-trees, where I remained standing and searching the horizon foot by foot, until the sun had risen, and the morning light lay broad and keen, and the whole water-line stood out like the edge of a globe of silver against the faint blue sky in the west and the rosy brilliance in the east; but no ship was to be seen.

It took me a good while to realize the bitterness of my disappointment. Probably it was that my mind was weakened by its sufferings, but I know there was no sting in my first perception that the sea was a blank. My apprehension of what that thing signified

to me was of slow growth; but when it smote me at last, I cried out, "O God! O God!" and only those words. The perspiration broke out upon me; the blood swarmed into my arms and cheeks, and tingled in my fingers as though each separate joint was venomously stung by reptiles; and, fearing that I was about to faint and should fall, I threw my legs over one of the cross-trees and jammed myself into the rigging. And it was well I did so, for the blood went into my head, and shutting my eyes that I might not see, I felt as though the mast on which I sat had been hurled through the air and was revolving with frightful rapidity as it sped along.

This feeling passing, I took a sup of brandy, and gained the top, where I stood for some moments looking down and reflecting. There was a strong breeze, but steady, not stronger than a trade wind, and there was more swell than sea on. This swell made the brig roll, but it threw no water aboard, though the waves would now and again slop as much as a dozen bucketfuls over the weather bulwarks, which drained

away fast; so, beyond getting soused to as high as the knees now and again, there was nothing to hinder me from moving about the deck.

One reason why I looked anxiously below was, I was terribly thirsty. The brandy did, indeed, pull my nerves together, but it dried up the roof of my mouth and parched my tongue, and when I wondered if I should find any fresh water aboard the wreck, the very thought of the ship went out of my head. I could think of nothing but my thirst, and what I should do if there was no water.

Casting my eyes forward, I noticed a couple of scuttle-butts lashed together and to eyes in the bulwarks; they stood on the starboard side of the galley, and all about them, as indeed all over the decks, the pines lay in heaps, torn up and thrown together fantastically by the sea. Immediately on seeing these casks I made to leave the top: but my arms trembled so violently that I had not strength to drop over the top by the futtock shrouds, and had to descend by the lubber's hole, and as I went slowly

down the shrouds, footing the ratlines like a man of eighty, the rigging quivered under me.

On reaching the deck I picked my way among the planks, tremulous with eagerness and fear lest there should be no water, until I reached the casks. The bung-holes were open, but I could not see any vessel to drop into them. I bent my face down to perceive the gleam of water, but this failing, I gave the first cask a kick and the sound satisfied me that it was nearly full. This filled me with joy, but it gave a new sharpness to my thirst too, and I went into the galley to hunt after any kind of vessel slender enough to pass through the bung-hole and bring up the water.

As I entered the door the pocket of my coat swung against the side of it. I put down my hand and felt the soda-water bottle, that was half-full of brandy. I immediately drew it out, and fitting it in the bung-hole of the cask, found that it would easily pass through; on which I emptied the brandy into a pannikin that I saw in the galley, and knotting together a couple

of rope-yarns, a whole bunch of which lay close against the cask, I bent the end on to the neck of the bottle and dropped it into the cask, and heard the gurgling of the water as the bottle filled. I drew out the bottle full and put it to my lips ; there was just the least flavour of salt in it, but so faint I had scarcely noticed it. I drained the whole bottle, and the cold draught tasted more sweetly and deliciously in my fevered mouth than I have language to express.

So here was enough fresh water to last a whole ship's company a long while, and used with care would carry me some weeks, as I reckoned ; indeed, the cask was nearly full, and it was a great cask too. But even this discovery was not enough ; I must needs try the second cask, and this I found quite full, and with less of the salt flavour in it than the other. I was so overjoyed, that when a few minutes afterwards I reflected on my transport, I could have wept to think how readily my mind had adapted itself to this miserable situation, and how my very elation illustrated the extent and character of my misfortune.

The draught of water served to freshen up my wits, for seeing that what little brackishness there was in the contents of the cask must have been caused by the salt water draining into the open bung-hole when the seas broke over the hull, I fashioned the bundle of rope-yarns into two hard bunches, with which I plugged the bung-holes, and I then went into the galley to seek for something to eat. There was a kind of dresser facing the oven and coppers, containing four drawers, and over the dresser were two shelves, in which were some black-handled knives and forks, a bottle of oil, another of vinegar, a number of tin and china plates, and other such matters, all jumbled together in great confusion.

In the first drawer I found a rude, ancient Bible, and some books and papers, which I might have examined but that I was as hungry as I had been thirsty before, and these were not the things I desired to come at. In the second drawer I found a canvas bag containing eight good sea-biscuits, a small quantity of flour loose in a tin dish, a whole bunch of candles, and in another dish

a piece of fresh pork, that was quite green and smelt abominably. I pitched it overboard that it might not pollute the other food, meanwhile munching upon one of the biscuits, and eating it with great relish and appetite.

In the third drawer I found some more flour, with several tins of preserved meat—in all five—together with about three handfuls of macaroni lying loose in the bottom of the drawer, and a canvas bag half-full of rice. The fourth drawer was empty. The dresser was so well made and fitted that not a drop of water had entered the drawers, though the seas had filled the galley over and over and over again. I had this advantage over any landsman who should have found himself in my position: I was a sailor and knew the habits of sailors and where to look, and, guided by a kind of instinct—for I believe had I reflected I should not have attempted such a search—I laid hold of a long fork lying on the deck, and going to the coppers I probed them, and to my astonishment and delight brought up a large piece of boiled junk. I probed

again, and brought up a smaller piece, but that was all. I had no doubt that the first piece had been cooking for the crew's dinner and the second piece for the cabin, and inferred from this that the crew must have left the brig in a hurry, and that at least two hours before they quitted her they had no intention of doing so, otherwise I should not have found these preparations for dinner. How long the meat had been in the water I could not imagine; but not very long, I supposed—not above two or three days—for though sodden with the water it was quite sweet and good.

So here, then, was as great an abundance as I could have prayed for; and having made a hearty meal, I stowed the provisions carefully away in the drawers, where, as they had remained secure throughout the gale, I judged they would remain secure now, and made my way aft, greatly invigorated and more hopeful of my future.

There was every promise again of fine weather. As the sun gained power it dried up the wind, and the sea was going down rapidly. No more water came aboard now,

and the deck and the planks were drying fast. Having got back some of my old strength, I swung myself into the rigging and climbed as high as the main royal yard, from which considerable elevation I very slowly and carefully swept the whole horizon, going round it again and again; but nothing was in sight.

When I last saw the *Waldershare* she had been standing to the north and east, and as the gale had hung very steadily in the quarter to which it had veered when the ship went about, I reckoned that on the port tack Mr. Thomas would have been able to head almost directly for me after first making a longish board to the north-east; and if so, then he had passed without seeing me in the night, and when I was asleep, and he should be now somewhere down in the south and west.

I gazed intently in what I took to be that quarter by the position of the sun. The sea there lay very brilliantly clear in consequence of the slanting beams of the rising sun, making the sky a bluish silver all that way, against which the horizon was

a sharp bright line, so that the least speck would have been visible ; but, as I have said, for leagues and leagues the water stretched around without an object but the wreck of the brig upon it.

I came down the rigging slowly, oppressed by a heavy sadness which I vainly endeavoured to lighten by reflecting that Mr. Thomas would know by within a few miles the whereabouts of the brig, and that I might be as sure as man dare be sure of anything in this disappointing world, that he would go on cruising about until he had sighted the brig. This, I say, is how I reasoned ; but there was a dreadful haunting under-thought, and it was this : that, having beheld the sea break over the hull of the wreck until nothing was visible but the tops of the masts, there was not a sailor aboard the ship who would believe I had not been swept away and drowned ; and after passing in the night the place where he supposed the brig should be, and not seeing her, and sincerely imagining that I was drowned, Mr. Thomas might have resolved to continue his voyage.

These doubts of the humanity of my shipmates did me little honour, I own: to suppose them capable of abandoning a search for me whilst there was the smallest chance of my being alive, was as bad as thinking them capable of cold-blooded cruelty; but I did not view my thoughts in this light. I said to myself without any further speculation, "They imagine I am drowned, and have given over looking for the brig as a useless job;" and this idea being stronger in me than the hope that Thomas would go on cruising for the wreck, made me terribly miserable and low, and when I reached the deck I sat me down on a pile of planks, and leaning my chin in my hand, remained for many minutes lost in hopelessly and moodily considering my position, my severance for ever, perhaps, from Nelly, the end of all my dreams, and the intolerableness and frightful lonesomeness of my death if I perished on this wreck.

However, God be praised, hope never dies in a man; indeed, I cannot conceive any surer sign of the immortality of man's spirit

than that to him alone, of all created things, is given the power of triumphing over present trial and distress by the help of a buoyant impulse that he cannot account for nor even justify, and yet that fills him with elation and makes him strong and patient. I reflected that, though the *Waldershare* may have sailed away, other vessels were likely to pass; that I was not in a little boat which would be invisible a few miles off, but on a hull the masts of which stood high above the sea, and on so clear a day as this could be descried ten miles off from the deck of a ship.

I looked aloft and had half a mind to loose the canvas, the topsails and foresail, and haul the sheets home as well as I could; but first I reflected that the wind would swirl the brig forward away from the place in which the *Waldershare* might come to look for her, and secondly that any ship sighting the brig under canvas would pass without taking notice, whereas if I left her as she was, looking wrecked forward and with no canvas set, any captain sighting her would be almost sure to bear down.

This very idea, however, made me see the necessity of hoisting some signal of distress, and so I got up and began to look about me for the vessel's colours. I had no idea what countryman she was; if she had any name on her stern, it was submerged and out of sight. But I was soon satisfied on this point, for searching where I believed the flag-locker would be stowed, I found it under a little grating just abaft the wheel. It was a small, long, narrow box, painted like a seaman's chest; and in it were a large and small English ensign.

I drew forth the larger ensign and bent it on the reverse way to the flag halliards leading from the royal-masthead, and hoisted it as high as the cross-trees; and that it might blow clear, I carried the halliards right aft and made them fast.

Having done this, I thought I would go and examine the cabins, and see what was to be found, and what information I might obtain respecting the vessel; but my eye happening to alight on the falls of the quarter-boat, I remembered the sunken boat alongside with the body of a man in it, and

immediately got upon the bulwarks and looked over. I had fully expected to find the boat smashed to pieces against the side of the vessel by the heavy seas which had poured without intermission over the hull during the night; instead of which the after fall had become unhooked, and the send of the sea had veered the boat stern foremost away from the brig. The corpse was gone out of her, but the boat was perfectly sound, and as she might be the means of saving my life, I resolved to hoist her out of the water.

I accordingly went forward to look for a watch-tackle, and found one hanging over the heel of one of the spare-booms over the galley. I brought it aft, clapped it on to the hauling part of the fall, and as the purchase of this tackle gave me the strength of several men I soon had the boat on end, her nose above the bulwarks. In this way all the water ran out of her. Her stern swung alongside; I got into her, hooked on the other fall, and in a few minutes had her swinging at the davits. As I meant that she should be in readiness for me, I went to the galley and took some

of the corks from the bottles there, and with one of them securely plugged her. I then looked about for some oars, and found one against the starboard side of the cabin, and one smuggled in among some pines which lay in a heap near the starboard davits; they were both good ash oars, and had evidently belonged to the broken boat, and had been washed inboard out of her by the sea that had carried her away. They were the only oars I could find, but they were real godsend, and increased the value of my boat a hundredfold. I laid them securely in her, and having in this way improved my chance of escape, I entered the cabin.

I have already briefly described this cabin, but when I looked into it on my first coming from the *Waldershare*, I was in a hurry, and took no further heed of what I saw than to make sure there was nobody alive in the wreck. I now observed that the cabin was a very smart and well-built house, the bulkhead being of polished elm, the doors solid, with handsomely carven panels, and the swinging lamp of richly decorated

bronze. Indeed, I may say, when I had first looked at the brig I had judged her to be a vessel over the building of which there had been no stint of money; her spars, rigging, decks, bulwarks, in short, everything that was visible, gave me the idea that she was one of the best and costliest specimens of her kind and size, and that whatever might be her present nationality she was French-built, almost new, and never designed by her builders for a timber-vessel.

What made me believe her origin French was the ornamentation. The wheel, for instance, was richly carved with floral devices, and the ceiling of her deck-house was a white ground, painted with scrawls representing the pattern of a drawing-room paper. But, wherever built, she was English now, as I had no doubt after finding the colours in the flag-locker.

I first inspected the foremost of the berths or cabins, of which, as I have said, there were three; and this, as I might at once guess, had been in the occupation of the carpenter, who would also, probably, in a vessel of this size, act as sailmaker, boat-

swain, and second mate; for up in one corner stood a great black chest, which, on lifting the lid, I found to contain tools of all descriptions—saws, hammers, calking-irons, chisels, files, nails, and so forth. In the bunk were a blanket and a pillow, together with an old monkey jacket that seemed to have been pitched hastily into it. Over the bunk was a shelf containing a quantity of twine, some palms, sailmaker's needles, and other things of that kind; and there was also a locker under the bunk stuffed full of pieces of new canvas. There was also a small chest near the door containing clothes.

The next berth, from the character of the articles I found in it, I supposed to have belonged to the mate. There was a middling-sized dark mahogany chest, the lid standing open. It was full of clothes and books; and there was a little side shelf in it with a lid, which I found half-full of Australian sovereigns, all brand-new as though they had but this moment arrived from the mint. I did not count them then, but I afterwards found there were two

hundred and seventy-eight of these coins. It seemed a strange place to leave so much money in, but there it was.

I looked at some of the books in the chest, and found them chiefly nautical works, old almanacs, routine-books, and navigation tables. In several was written the name of Thomas Sidewell. As in the other cabin, so here was a shelf over the bunk and a locker below it. On the shelf were several charts, some pretty old, but all of them with courses pricked; a very fine, powerful telescope, with the name "Thomas Sidewell, Sydney, N.S.W." engraved upon it; an empty sextant case; and a small collection of novels and magazines. In the locker under the bunk I found nothing but some mouldy boots and clothes. There were some blankets in the bunk, and a large, warm skin.

As I left this cabin to inspect the third and last, I noticed what I had not before seen—a little sliding door at the end of the living-room, just abaft the head of the table. I know not why I should have gone to this door instead of into the third cabin, but

I did so, and sliding it open, I found a compartment about three and a half feet deep, and of the breadth of the deck-house. I stepped into it, but it was dark, and I could see nothing until my eyes got used to the gloom. I then found myself in what was evidently the brig's store-room, or where, at all events, they stowed enough provisions to last all hands for a spell, and save them the job of going into the lazarette, where no doubt the vessel's stores were kept; for here were two casks of flour; several great bags of ship's bread or biscuit; some kegs of salt butter; a great number of tins containing preserved spuds, or potatoes, and meats of different kinds; some jars of lime-juice; molasses; two barrels of beef and pork; and several stone jars encased in wicker-work, which, on smelling, I discovered held brandy and rum. I also found no less than three dozen bottles of a wine that, when I afterwards tasted it, had the flavour of claret, though it was somewhat sweeter and had more body than that wine; yet it was not port, nor anything like port.

There were many other articles of food

which I need not particularize, among other things a case of plug tobacco of the kind sailors smoke.

The discovery of all these provisions only kindled a dull satisfaction in me. I had felt tenfold more pleasure when I came across the small quantity of food in the galley. I do not know why this should have been, unless it was that I found something ominous in the sight of so much provision—as if fate intended that my stay in this wreck should be long enough to make me find even all the things I now saw not too much to prolong my life.

I closed the sliding door, and there remaining one more cabin, I went into it, and found it to be the captain's cabin by several strong indications. I stood on a chair to look into the hammock, but found nothing but the usual bed-clothes. The bunk was bare. There was no sea-chest here, but several lockers were ranged round, and these lockers contained clothes and books and papers.

In one locker I found three bags of gold, each bag containing one hundred Australian

sovereigns, and two bags of mixed silver pieces amounting to twenty-nine pounds eleven shillings. Likewise in this locker were five boxes of very fine cigars ; a small case of gold watches ; another little box full of trinkets, such as seals, gold keys, lockets, and the like ; a large paper of ivories, such as card-cases, brooches, napkin-rings, combs, etc. In short, including the gold and silver, I reckoned the worth of the contents of that locker at between seven and eight hundred pounds.

In another locker, under some clothes, I found a number of opera-glasses, at least a dozen ; about a hundred yards of fine yellow silk ; some meerschaum pipes, quite new ; a gross of pocket-knives, and various other articles which my memory no longer carries. How the captain came by all these things, or what he intended to do with them ; whether he meant to trade with them (but this I thought unlikely), or whether they were designed as bribes or presents ; and how such a number of articles of European manufacture were got together in this little brig, that was evidently a

trader in these seas, and that hailed from some port south of the Line, as I might imagine, I could not conjecture.

However, in rummaging, presently I came upon a tin box, which I found open; and looking into it I discovered that it held the vessel's papers,—that is, her articles, registry, manifest, etc. From these papers I gathered as much of her story as I had any curiosity to learn.

I found that she was the brig *Morning Star*, built at Brest in 1856, of 198 tons register, belonging to Port Otago, New Zealand, and bound to Valparaiso with a cargo of New Zealand pine planks consigned to Messrs —— of that port; that she was owned by Richard and Thomas Sidewell; that Richard Sidewell was master, Thomas Sidewell mate, Benjamin Lupman second mate and carpenter, and that there had been six able seamen, a cook, and two apprentices.

All this information was set forth in her register, articles, and manifest; but the captain, when he abandoned her, had evidently taken his log-book with him, and,

what was of greater consequence to me, I could find no sextant nor quadrant in any of the cabins, though in the master's berth there were two chronometers, both of which had stopped. I was exceedingly anxious to find a sextant, because I wished to ascertain whether the wreck had drifted and to what extent since the previous day, and also to discover whither she was tending, and if she was likely to come within the sphere of vessels bound to the eastward or northward round the Horn; but my search was useless.

I took the telescope and went on deck. Looking at my watch, I found that I had been engaged about an hour and a half in these discoveries; and the moment I was in the open air and noted how the time had slipped by, I thought myself mad to have remained below for so long a while, and springing on to the deck-house I levelled the telescope and swept the horizon. There was nothing to be seen. The breeze was very gentle and the sea almost smooth, the flag shook languidly under the cross-trees, and the smell of the drying pines was

sweet and strong, and carried my thoughts away to the shore.

I was tired, and quitted the top of the deck-house, where the whole heat of the sun streamed upon me ; and fetching a chair from the cabin, I placed it in the shadow of the mainmast, and, with my hands in my pockets and my legs idly stretched out, fell into deep thought. What was like a wound in my heart was the idea that Nelly would be ceaselessly reproaching herself as the cause of my having left the *Waldershare*. Then my memory went back to the last night we had spent together in Burmarsh, the calm English sunset, the placid river, my sweetheart's face in the moonlight ; then I thought of her courageous devotion that had made her resolve on accompanying me on this voyage, how great a happiness and pride her presence had given me, and of our many conversations and my untold desire that we should be married at Callao. Could all this be finished, indeed ? Was I never again to see her ? Was the end at hand, and was I to meet a sailor's death at a time when life could not be dearer to

me, and when hope could never be gayer? There was no answer to these questions, unless it was the sob of the water washing round the lonely hull, and the groan that came out of the very heart of her when she lifted wearily to the swell. I felt a hot tear trickle down my face. If there had been no Nelly in the world it would have needed more than my loneliness and peril to unman me; but how could I recall her, and think we might never meet again, and look around upon the lonely sea and on this sunken hull, whose deck was almost level with the water, and be a man? There was no eye to see me, and I felt no shame; and, lest you should laugh, let me tell you that I do not know that my tears made me the less ready to meet with a steady pulse any end Almighty God might have chosen for me.

After musing thus for half an hour, I fell asleep, and slept until past noon. No amazement like what had come to me when I opened my eyes in the main-top disturbed me when I awoke. My situation had become familiar, but my first act was

to ascend the rigging with the glass in my hand and again search every point of the compass. This I felt I must do regularly, and that it would be as much a part of my life whilst I remained on the wreck as thinking and moving.

It was a little after mid-day ; there was no wind at all now, and the heat of the sun was very fierce. I was thirsty, and went forward to get a drink of water, and then went into the galley and ate some salt beef and a biscuit. I lingered over this repast as long as I could, for the mere act of eating took me away from myself. Not yet having served any apprenticeship to loneliness, it was hateful to me ; I feared it ; I could not endure to think that whether I went forward or aft I should find nobody to speak to. And my solitude sharpened my imagination, too : and I had a dread of going near the foreshuttle that led into the forecastle, for I did not know but that there might be a corpse down there. There is no trial so great as loneliness, and no man can know what strength of mind he has, who has not been in a situation in which he

would have given all he possessed for one hour of human companionship.

It entered my head as I came away from the galley that by throwing as much as I could of the deck-load overboard, I should lighten the hull to the extent of that weight, which, although it was wood, yet, as it was out of the water, gave her no buoyancy; and I was the more impelled to go to work by fearing that if I sat idle and musing I should grow light-headed.

The length of the planks varied between twenty and thirty feet, and were of unequal breadth and thickness. The shorter and lighter ones I could make shift to raise with my hands, and I tackled them first. A particular reason I had for getting rid of this deck-hamper was that the bulwarks of the brig might lift somewhat, and afford me a taller protection against the seas should it come on to blow again; and besides, the decks were in a terrible litter, and though no other good followed the discharge of this portion of the cargo, its removal would leave the decks free and convenient to move about in.

In an hour's time I had succeeded in throwing a great number of planks overboard, and there they lay, all floating about in the water alongside, as though the hull of the brig had gone to pieces. But I had had as much of this work as I wanted for the present, though it had roused me up and done me more good than ever I expected it would; and being on fire after my exertions, I dropped a bucket overboard, and pulling off my shirt soused myself with the cool salt water. This made me fancy a smoke; so I went into the cabin and got some tobacco out of the store-room, and helped myself to one of the meerschaum pipes in the captain's locker. But when my pipe was filled, how was I to light it? I searched about, but could not lay my hand on a box of matches. I looked high and low, but my search failing, it occurred to me to unscrew one of the lenses of the telescope, which I held between the sun and my pipe, and soon had the tobacco alight.

So there I sat in the shadow of the mainmast, and with every puff I was cast-

ing my eyes around the horizon ; but, unless I hoped to see the smoke of a steamer, I was a fool for troubling myself to look, for it was a dead calm, and the ocean for a league away beyond the brig swam in a haze of heat, and overhead the small white clouds palpitated like stars.

When I had smoked my pipe and rested myself, I turned to and pitched another lot of pines overboard, and what with the sea having done a great deal in this way first, the decks began to look somewhat clear. After I had worked for some time, I went to have another search for a sextant. It was extremely vexing not to be able to tell where I was, what drift I made, and whether there was any current at work for me. On the preceding day, the nearest land to us had been the island of Juan Fernandez, bearing north-east by east ; and now I thought, should a westerly wind spring up, there was nothing to hinder me from getting sail upon the brig and letting her drive for that island. I do not say that I should have done that at once, because I dared not allow myself to be per-

suaded that the *Waldershare* had abandoned the search for me, and I perceived that the further I drifted away from the spot in which we had first sighted the brig, the less chance would there be of her finding me. But at the same time, I understood that if she did not heave in sight soon, I should have to go to work to haul the wreck somehow into the track of ships, or get her into port; and I saw how greatly I should want a sextant to help me, for dead reckoning would serve me but a poor turn in a craft that would probably sail, if she sailed at all, beam foremost, and make a due northerly course with her head at west.

I overhauled all the lockers again, and searched every nook and corner of the cabins; but I could not find what I wanted, though I was rewarded in a measure for my pains by lighting on some thousands of wax matches in half a dozen long tin boxes, all dry and in good condition. So, positively, there was scarcely a convenience that I did not find in this little brig; yet I would have parted with all the money and jewellery and ivory for one old sextant.

Lest my watch should fail me, I wound up the chronometers and set them by my watch, that had been regulated to yesterday's observations, and was probably true to within a few minutes for to-day. I could not account for there being no sextants aboard, except by supposing that the captain and mate had taken them. If so, then they had put off in the long-boat with the crew, for the purpose, perhaps, of making the very island—Selkirk's Island—that I had in my thoughts. Their determination to quit the wreck, however, must have been formed very suddenly, for the meat in the coppers proved that the cook had been making ready the dinner; and then, again, so far as I could judge by the look of the cabins, they appeared to have taken nothing with them in the shape of clothes and other property. But no doubt the long-boat of such a vessel as this would be too small to hold more than the souls which went into her; and she may not have held them all either, for one of them certainly lay drowned in the quarter-boat. But every shipwreck is a great puzzle until the story

of it is told. It is then plain enough; but in ninety-nine cases in every hundred it is impossible to arrive at anything like the truth from the internal evidence one finds in an abandoned vessel.

Whilst the sun was up, and I could see about me, I was comparatively easy in my mind. I had killed a good deal of the day in pitching the planks overboard, eating my meals, hunting in the cabins, etc.; but as the sun approached the horizon my spirits fell, a terrible depression seized me, all the horror of my lonely and perilous situation rushed into my soul with the thought of the long, dark, silent night into which I was entering.

Before the darkness fell, I went into the store-room, where I had noticed some cans of oil, and trimmed and lighted the bronze cabin-lamp; and I also trimmed and lighted a large ship's lantern that showed a green light. I could not find the red light anywhere, though I hunted high and low, and suspected that, unless it were overboard, it had been taken into the fore-castle to clean. I say, I trimmed and lighted this

green lantern, that gave a very clear, good light, and carried it on deck; and hauling down the ensign, I bent the lantern on to the halliards and carefully hoisted it to the royal-masthead.

This, I flattered myself, was an act of great judgment; for a green light, showing at a height like that, was sure to excite the attention of any vessel passing. It was like a lighthouse, and they would wonder what it was, and run down to see. But there would have to be some wind first, before any sailing ship could sight that lantern. The calm was intense. The sun went down round and naked—a great ball of fire that throbbed and opened and shut as though it were composed of folds of red heat, which lifted and sank by their own fierce ardency; and under it the sea lay like a huge lake of blood to receive it. Before it vanished, I again carefully scanned the horizon; and when I dropped the glass with an involuntary groan, the sun was gone, the sky was ablaze as if a great city were on fire behind the sea. But this majestic light faded very quickly, and a

quarter of an hour after the sun had set, the sky was full of small delicate stars, and the sea lay black and luminous, a surface of polished jet.

There was no stir of air, no canvas to flap. The night brought with it an awful silence; only now and again the water in the hold of the brig made a gurgling sound, and there would be a faint creak or a soft jar among the wrecked spars forward.

I hung about the deck until the darkness, and the desolate, spectral, looming deck, and the solitude, bred such thoughts as frightened me; I felt the veins in my head swelling, and my cheeks and forehead burning, while my hands and feet were as cold as death. Once I thought I saw a shadow moving forward, and knowing very well that no living creature was aboard, I trembled from head to foot, and could not take my eyes away from the place; but at last I grew mad to think that I should be so great a coward, and went forward, and then I found that what had frightened me was the yard-arm of the fore royal yard, that was made bulky by the sail furled upon it, and that

loomed in the darkness with something of the shape and proportions of a figure.

Still, a hundred superstitious fancies haunted me; I could not dispossess my mind of the belief that there were men lying drowned in the forecastle. I had not an atom of reason to believe this; yet it was like a conviction in me, and I cannot express the horror and inward shrinking that part of the brig excited in me, as it lay all black, with the stars over the horizon shining faintly through the intricate and confused network of rigging caused by the topmast having carried away and bringing all its gear down.

But I had sense enough to understand that it would not do to give way to fancies of this kind, or they might play me a more malignant trick than this wreck itself had done. I was ripe for a fever, and I knew it, and that if I did not want to become delirious, and perhaps jump overboard, I must brace my nerves together and steady my mind. So, remembering there were books in the berths, I said to myself, what could I do better than force myself to read?

A book is like a human voice, and will sometimes cheat the mind into a feeling of companionship that is often more real than the society of a living person. So I unhooked the lamp from the deck of the cabin, and went into the mate's berth and brought away a handful of books ; though God knows it cost me a great effort to enter that berth, for in the state of mind I was then in every relic of the man who had lived there had a ghastly significance. I had to lean across the bunk to take the books from the shelf, and the sight of the blankets and bolster threw me into a sweat. I felt that, had I lingered another minute, I must have dashed down the books and sprang on to the deck ; indeed, I was suffering from a kind of hysteria induced by extreme agitation and grief, and I can only devoutly thank God I did not go mad outright, for I am sure I was desperately near it once or twice.

Having set the books on the table, I went and mixed myself a glass of grog, and sat down and turned the books about. But it would not do : I could not read ; the very

sight of the print set my temples throbbing. Yet I did not like to quit the cabin, and the light either; the thought of the dark deck, and the fear of my imagination coining fancies of moving things forward, held me to my place. I could see through the little skylight that my lantern burned bravely at the masthead, and the sight of it yielded me some comfort; it was like a faithful companion keeping a look-out, and would court any vessel that might heave in sight. Every now and again the bulkhead would creak a little, and the pain this sound, amidst the frightful stillness, gave my nerves is indescribable. Sometimes the water gurgled hollowly right under my feet, as it washed among the planks in the hold.

I tried to comfort myself by contrasting this peace with the gale of the preceding night; how much more secure I was now than I had been then; that last night I slept in the top exposed to the wind and the spray, and wet through to the skin, and to-night I should lie warm and as securely as though I were on board a fine ship; that last night I did not know but that I

might die of hunger and thirst, whereas I knew now there was not only an abundance of water but of provisions also, with more luxuries than I should have been able to command aboard the *Waldershare*. But I could get no consolation out of these reflections. All the time my heart was crying out for Nelly, and I thought with bitterness of Mr. Thomas having left me to perish miserably, for all he knew to the contrary; and my only speculations which were honest were those which concerned my future, whether I should be rescued and when, or whether I should drift about in this horrid wreck until I went mad, or until the vessel broke up under me.

At last, after sitting in this way for two or three hours, I fell asleep with my head on the table, and slept soundly until one o'clock. I then awoke, feeling refreshed and with more courage in me, for I immediately went on deck, and observing that the lantern at the masthead burned dimly, I hauled it down, trimmed it afresh, and then hoisted it again. I also narrowly scanned the horizon with the glass, and then seeing the good I

derived from sleep, I took the small ensign from the locker, carried it into the cabin, and making a pillow of it, buttoned up my coat and lay down on the deck; for, although I had more courage, yet I had not enough to venture into one of the bunks, or even to use a blanket; and in this posture I slept soundly, and when I awoke the sun had been risen an hour.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRE-RAFT.

My sleep had done me so much good, and so completely set me up again, that when I looked back upon my fears and fancies in the night, I hardly believed it possible that I could have been guilty of such womanly weakness. My first act, of course, was to run up aloft with the glass; but there was nothing in sight, and now every hope I had cherished of the *Waldershare* remaining to cruise about for me vanished, and I saw that if I was to be rescued it would be by some strange vessel.

I hauled down the lantern and hoisted the flag as I had done on the previous day, and then went to get some breakfast. There was plenty of tea in the store-room, and I felt that a pannikin of hot tea would

have a wonderful relish for me, who had not drunk anything warm since the morning of the day I had quitted the *Waldershare*.

I took a hatchet from the tool-chest and went and chopped up a quantity of wood, with which I made a good fire in the galley; and up in a corner of the galley I found a heap of coals which I threw upon the fire, and this made a noble show of smoke. I was delighted to see the smoke run up in a thick black line out of the galley chimney; it was as good as a beacon.

There was a pleasant breeze, just enough to set the sea running in little waves with a thin edging of froth to them, and the sky was full of high white clouds, which tempered the heat of the sun and helped to make the morning a bright and joyous one. This breeze cheered me too, for I thought it could not fail to bring a ship with it at some hour during the long day.

I filled the small copper with water, and soon had it boiling, and having brewed myself some strong tea, I carried it aft, and was presently seated at a fine breakfast of salt junk, biscuit, and preserved meat. This

repast being over, I smoked a pipe, and then went to work to get some more of the deck-load overboard. The planks I had got rid of yesterday were all lying together about half a mile to leeward. I could not believe that the wind had carried them that distance, for at one o'clock that morning when I had come on deck it was still a dead calm, and being all on the lee side of the brig they would necessarily be sheltered from the wind. This made me suppose I was in a current setting to the north, and that the planks being lighter than the submerged hull, they had floated more quickly with the current.

Any way I was satisfied that by throwing the deck-load overboard I should lighten the brig without imperilling the flotation power of the timber in the hold ; but before I went to work I fetched a chart of the South Pacific from the captain's berth, and setting it on deck, commenced a calculation by marking off on the chart the spot where the brig was when first sighted by the *Waldershare*, and assuming that this current was running at about a mile and

a half an hour, and trending due north, and then allowing for the drift of the brig during the gale of yesterday. By this dead reckoning I concluded that the brig was about eight to ten miles to the northward of the spot at which we had sighted her; but it would have pleased me more to think that she had made that amount of easting too, for the nearer I could drift to the Chilian shore the larger would be my chance of being picked up.

With the renewal of my strength, hope revived in me. I do not say that I was buoyant. I believed that my only chance of salvation lay in some passing vessel; that days might pass without bringing a ship, although, such were the chances, a ship might heave in sight within the very next hour; and that therefore my life would depend upon this wreck continuing to float. But this was the very thing that gave me the hope I had. The more I saw of the brig the more was I satisfied with her great strength. Her very bulwarks were those of a Government cruiser, and every portion of her that was visible showed a

craft built on the old-fashioned principle that a vessel is not only meant to swim but to last. How she came to be full of water I could not, of course, imagine; but I should have been willing to wager that the leak, so far as it might go as a repairing job, would turn out no great matter, and that a very little labour would fit the hooker to weather many a gale yet, and prove herself one of the handsomest and liveliest vessels of her size afloat.

I persevered in my intention to get rid of the deck-load as much for the sake of occupation as for the reason I have given. Most of the larger planks obliged me to use the watch-tackle, as they were above my strength, and so the work progressed slowly; however, as one by one they went overboard there could be no question that their removal lightened the vessel. How much she rose I could not tell, for I had not noticed the exact point at which she lay submerged when I boarded her; but on looking over the side now my eye detected a sensible increase of height from the water's edge, and as every inch was some-

thing to the good, as offering more freeboard to the sea, I had no reason to regret my labour.

I worked in this way with little intermission the whole morning, until the sea alongside was covered with the planks, and they lay bobbing there like a vast raft. I then knocked off, and after refreshing myself with a bucket of salt water, I got some dinner and took the glass into the cross-trees.

I began, as was my custom, with the horizon that lay directly over the bows of the brig, and swept slowly and with careful scrutiny as far as the starboard beam; but when I had got as far as that, there stole into the field of the glass the upper sails of a vessel, the hull of which was below the water-line.

The sight of her set me all of a tremble; I was so used to searching without being rewarded for my pains, that this sail heaving in sight suddenly took away my breath. I removed the glass from my eye, but she was only the faintest speck to my naked gaze, and I should never have noticed her without

the telescope. She was dead to windward, but how heading I could not make out, nor indeed could I tell her rig beyond that she carried square canvas. However, after watching her for some time, I found that she gradually sank her canvas, at the same time that she was edging away to the eastwards. I therefore concluded that she was standing to the north-east, and that she had come up from the westward and passed me, hull down, astern.

I watched her until the highest tip of her white canvas quivered on the horizon like the fluctuating gleam of a play of distant foam, and when she had vanished, I searched the rest of the sea and then went below.

Strangely enough, I was sensible of no great disappointment, nor could I reproach myself for not having kept a better look-out, for even had I sighted her when she was in the west I should never have been able to make her see me. At the same time she had put a thought into my head, and it was this: that I would make a raft of the wood floating alongside, and prepare a great

bonfire on it, which I would set a-blazing when the night fell, and which, as I would make it huge enough to last for some hours, would furnish me with an infinitely better beacon than my green lantern, and greatly improve my chance of being discovered by any ship passing in the darkness.

This scheme took my fancy mightily, and I at once went to work to carry it out. I went forward and collected a number of spare lines, studding-sail halliards, etc., which I brought away from the raffle on the forecastle; these, and a sheath-knife that I found in the galley, sufficed for my job. I then took the end of the painter of the boat I had hoisted and bent it on to the port fore-brace, so as to have plenty of scope; then lowered the boat and got into her, and unhooked her, and shoved her among the floating planks. The breeze was very light, as I have said, and the water under the lee of the brig perfectly calm, so there was no risk of my boat being injured by the plank ends.

I had soon made a raft strong enough to support me when I stood on it; and by

lashing planks crosswise and decking them, and then lashing more planks athwart this deck and framing them, I constructed a raft that stood high out of water and was capable of carrying a great load.

The labour of all this was prodigious, for, as I have said, the planks were very heavy, and I had to fetch the watch-tackle in order to haul many of the planks aboard my raft. But I was greatly encouraged by the thought of the blaze my bonfire would make, and the hope of this blaze being the means of bringing a vessel to my rescue would have made me undertake a heavier job than that to come at such a bonfire as I had in my mind.

This raft took me three hours to complete, and when it was done I hauled it alongside, and got on board the brig to rest myself, and stood looking at it with as much pride as I should have contemplated a ship I had built. All this while the wind remained a steady, gentle breeze, and the sky cloudy; but the clouds were white and high, and the sunshine, therefore, was greatly tempered.

It was now three o'clock. There was plenty of time to chop up the wood, and pile the material for a bonfire ; so I helped myself to a cigar from one of the boxes in the captain's berth, and mixed myself a glass of brandy, and carried it, with a chair and my telescope, to the top of the deck-house. In truth, having recovered my nerves, and my hard work having served me better than any physic could have done, I made up my mind not to permit any forebodings to dispirit me, but to keep my eyes steadily fixed on the bright side of my situation, and, above all, to have faith in God's providence. When I recalled some of the stories I had read of the sufferings of shipwrecked mariners, and contrasted my position with theirs, my heart swelled with gratitude, and I felt almost conscience-stricken over my repinings and cowardly fears and superstitions. I own that my heart came into my throat when I thought of my sweetheart, and the misery she would endure, not knowing whether I was living or dead ; or, if living, what my sufferings were. But then I said

to myself, "Thanks be to God, I am not dead, nor am I suffering; and I must not and do not doubt that the Almighty, who has watched over me so far, will guide some ship to my rescue. So that, whether Nelly and I are parted for a month or a year, yet it will be all well in the end; and, great as our grief is now, we shall in the future look back upon it as a trial that led us into a greater discovery of each other's love; and we may even yet learn that, hard as it was to bear, it was a merciful Hand that contrived it all."

These were my reflections, and in this way I strove to keep up my heart. And I do believe that the spirit of prophecy was never stronger in mortal man than it was in me when I talked in this strain to myself, as the sequel will show you. Though does it not come to this,—that no man can err who, no matter how heavy may be the fate that befalls him, whether it be the death of one he holds dearest of all created beings, or the loss of his fortune, or the failure of a life-long scheme, or the being thrown into a situation of desperate peril,

accepts what comes with honest confidence in the Divine reason that shapes his life away from his hopes, and faithfully believes that in the fulness of time he will look back and say that what happened, happened well for him indeed, and that were he to live his life over again he would not have it otherwise.

I hope the reader will forgive me for crudely moralizing in this way. Thoughts like these were in my mind at this time, and it is because they were a part of the true picture of myself as I was when I was alone on the water-logged brig, many leagues from land, on the bosom of the mighty Pacific, with no creature to speak to, and having only my heart to look into for courage and faith, that I include them in my narrative.

I now went to work to get the raft ready for firing. I was determined to have such a blaze that anybody, viewing it from a distance in the night, should imagine it was a ship on fire. I wanted a blaze to redden the air, so that it should be visible from the deck of a ship fifteen miles at least. If

no good came of it, it would only have cost me the labour of heaping the materials for the fire ; and, at all events, whilst it burned it would make the night less lonesome, and furnish me with a chance of rescue beyond anything my green lantern would give.

I had noticed a tar-bucket full of tar and water under the bowsprit when I was forward, getting the lines for constructing the raft. I now fetched it, and on emptying the water, found that two-thirds of the contents were tar. So, after sawing some of the planks into short pieces, I chopped them up, smeared them with tar, and laid them upon the raft. I then began to throw the planks over the side on to the raft, working with great energy and spirit until they stood as high as the bulwark. I got on to them, and made a wider distribution of them ; and then regained the hull, and turned to and threw more planks over, raising many of them by means of the watch-tackle, until the raft looked as big as a house. However, so soon as she was covered, and the top of the freight was level with the rail of the bulwark, I

was done, for I could not get any more planks on to it; though, had I had a companion, we might have built the thing as high as the mainyard, by means of a block at the yard-arm, and one man to hoist away on the brig, and the other to stand on the raft and receive the planks.

But though I could not make my raft bigger, it was big enough; indeed, I had entirely cleared the port side of the hull of her deck-load.

It was now within half an hour of sunset. I had spent the whole of the day over this raft, and when I came to look back upon my labour, and reflected that in a few hours it would be all what Espinosa would call *gastados*—spent, evaporated—and that the chances were fifty to one against the blaze being seen, or rather against there being any ship in the neighbourhood to see it, I thought it was scarcely worth while to have gone through so much for so little. Yet even one chance in fifty to a man situated as I was, was of great consequence; and besides, if I had not made the raft, I dare say when the darkness came I should have

abused myself for an idle fool in not having done so, and made myself miserable by believing that a ship would pass in the night that would certainly have seen the blaze had it been there; so I had done the right thing to please myself, laborious as the job had proved.

One thing vexed me greatly to notice, and this was that the breeze was dying away again. I had no expectation of a steamer being in these seas so far to the westward, and indeed I dared not look for many sailing vessels, and whilst it remained calm I had nothing to hope from the few which might be in these latitudes.

I had attended to the galley fire during the day, and went to get some tea, and after refreshing myself with a wash and making a good meal, I ascended as far as the main-royal yard with my glass to have a last look round before the sun went down. It proved a fruitless errand. This made me feel very bitter and melancholy, though I had not the least idea when I went aloft that I should sight a vessel.

My eye happening to fall upon the

wrecked fore-topmast, it came into my head to ask myself why I thought fit to linger in this spot; why, now that I might be sure the *Waldershare* was no longer in search of me, I did not make some effort to clear away the raffle forward, and get sail upon the vessel, and make what headway was possible on a course that would bring me more within the track of ships. It would only need a little working with my knife to cut the rigging clear, and let the wrecked spars fall free of the lower mast, and then I should find no difficulty in setting the foresail and main-topsail, and reeving the fore-topmast staysail halliards through a block, seized to the head of the fore-topmast, so as to get some head-sail upon her. How she would steer, if she steered at all, being water-logged, I could not imagine; but it was better that she should swoosh forward anyhow and, I may say, anywhere, than lie as though she were moored in one spot; and I made up my mind as I quitted the mast that, if nothing came of my bonfire, I would at daybreak next morning make sail upon the little *Morning*

Star, and find her heels to carry me somewhere.

The sun went down and there was a noble sunset. All day long the sky had been full of light high clouds, like mother-o'-pearl, and they were still there; and now the red blaze found a thousand forms to catch and repeat it in as many tints, like the echoing of a great sound that dwindles and dwindles into tiny liquid reverberations. There seemed to be no movement in these clouds at all. They made the heavens resemble a broad surface of mosaic work; but when the flush of the sunset spread through them, it was indeed a sight to kindle the eye to behold the dazzling pinks and crimsons, the soft haze of gold, the violet shadows lurking in the skirts, the orange of the fronts of the eastern clouds, with the soft dappling of the blue between, whilst the sea, save where the sun's upper limb hung like a glowing ember dashing the water beneath with a streak of rich red gold, was kept a delicate green by the running of the soft wind.

All this splendour died away quickly, and

the shadows gathered, and as I turned to fetch and light my green lantern I wondered how many more sunsets I was to witness alone.

I was in no great hurry to fire my pile, for, as I have written, there was no sail in sight, and though one should be now just below the horizon, yet it would take a good while for the breeze to bring her within the compass of the light. I now did what I had neglected to do on the previous night: I trimmed and lighted the binnacle lamp, as I did not know but that I might require to use the compass before the morning; I also hoisted the green lantern at the masthead, and lighted the cabin lamp, and I then filled a pipe and quietly walked to and fro the deck, for nothing remained to be done for the present.

I was no longer troubled by any superstitious fancies; my better acquaintance with the brig and my improved health made such weakness impossible. Yet, now that the darkness had fallen, the sense of loneliness weighed heavily upon me; and so greatly did I yearn for the sound of a

human voice, that had I had the heart to sing, I should have done so, merely for the sake of the sound. Once, indeed, I spoke aloud: I forced myself to say (I know not why I should have said those words, but I wanted to say something, and I took the first thought), "Will, is it so bad with you as you think?" but it was not like singing. My voice sounded unreal; it actually startled me; it seemed to demand an answer, and no reply coming, caused me to realize the solitude with a fulness that was shocking. So I thought I would make no more experiments of that kind, but think of my bonfire, and of my resolution to make sail in the morning if nothing came of my fire-raft.

The breeze was very light, still there was more of it than I had believed would follow the sunset; it kept the water rippling, and was what sailors would call a four-knot breeze. But it was a dark night, even darker than the previous night; the clouds intercepted the starlight, and their shadows hung black in the sea. My green lantern shone brightly aloft, and yet it was but

a wretched little beacon for so spacious a scene.

However, as the air held, and it was past nine o'clock, I thought I would fire my raft at once, and take my chance of what might come of it; for it was not a thing to keep in tow for a better opportunity, as not only would a very little sea have swamped and tumbled it to pieces, but were a fall of rain to come I should never be able to get the wood to catch fire. Accordingly, slipping a handful of matches into my pocket, I hauled the quarter-boat alongside and got into her, and bent a rope's end on to the raft, and towed her away from the brig so that the vessel might be clear of the flames.

When I had got the raft about three cables' length from the brig I threw in my oar, and let go of her, and hauling the boat close alongside set the raft on fire. There was no difficulty in doing this, for I had taken care that the ground tier should be composed of small pieces of wood; and as these were well tarred, they were soon crackling and hissing, and spurting out long

lines of steam. Seeing that the raft was fairly ablaze, I sculled back to the brig and got the boat under the davits, and hooked the falls in her. The outline of the brig was plain enough, and the haze of the light in the cabin and the binnacle made a delicate luminous circle in the air over them like lamplight in a fog; but it was so dark alongside that I had to grope about to hook on the boat, albeit every movement in the water made the phosphorus flash up, and along the whole length of the brig, and for a whole fathom under her, the water pulsated with long thin, sparkling green lines.

After a short hunt for the watch-tackle, I brought it aft and hoisted the boat up; and by this time the raft was all of a blaze. The pines were the right kind of wood to burn, and a mighty fire they made; as much smoke went up as out of a burning house, and the inky coil was alive with sparks which were blown out of the wood by the steam, for, as you may suppose, most of the planks were tolerably damp. The fire roared like a gale of wind, and as the flames

gathered force, and the lower strata of timber became huge glowing embers, they coloured the sea under them a blood-red, and for half a mile round the water was lighted up, the ripples as they ran out of the black sea into the sphere of the fire becoming a sickly yellow, whilst every rope and spar and block of the brig was illuminated, and stood out against the dark sky as though a gilt-brush had been passed over them, and the shadows on the deck looked like black silk needlework on the yellow satin of a Chinaman's court gown.

I stood for half an hour watching this fire, that grew greater and greater, as one by one the tiers of planks became dry and were ignited, whilst the deck-work of pines on which the timber was heaped was also ablaze, so that the whole red and flaming pile, burning on the very water's edge, looked like the head of some submarine volcano that was slowly forking out its incandescent summit, and was so interested by the sight that I did not notice the breeze had entirely failed, until I observed that there was a draught of wind coming direct

from the opposite quarter by the smoke of the fire blowing right athwart the wreck.

I found no particular significance in this until, on going further aft to get clear of the smoke, I saw that the sparks which floated on the huge black coil that the pines were vomiting up struck the rigging and spars, and hung glowing for some moments, whilst others sailed away over the sea on the starboard side of the brig, and sometimes whole showers flew through the spars of the vessel as though a rocket had exploded in the main-top.

I was now in a fine fright, for I not only feared that these sparks would set fire to the brig, but I could not doubt that the wind, such as it was, was slowly driving the huge fire-raft down upon the wreck; for the very flames acted as sails, and besides, the raft, floating on a flat bottom and offering a high surface to the wind, was bound to drift five feet to the brig's one.

My first idea was to lower the boat, and at all risks to get the raft in tow again, and row so as to clear the stern of the brig; but the pines were now become a vast

roaring furnace. With the wind blowing that way I could, even at that distance, feel the fire, and whilst a moment's reflection showed me that whilst the intolerable heat would not let me approach the raft by twenty feet, the mere job of launching the boat would waste me precious time, and allow the furnace to drift close aboard the brig.

Seeing, therefore, that unless I could manage to get the brig out of the road of the raft she must be burnt, I sprang forward, jumped into the fore-rigging, and with breathless haste lay out on the yard, and cut away the gaskets, which held the foresail, as fast as ever I could ply my knife. Fortunately, the raft gave me as much light as I needed, and this enabled me to work with great despatch. I then loosed the topsail, for, although the upper portion of the topmast was gone, and the yard could not be hoisted, I reckoned that even the folds of the canvas would offer some surface to the wind and help to stir the sluggish hull. The wreck of the topgallant mast hung up and down the fore-

mast, but there was no time now to cut it away. I came down from aloft with such speed that it was lucky I did not break my neck, and hauled the foreyard round as far as the condition of the mast would let it go; and so with the topsail yard; and they swung far enough, for what wind there was was right abeam. I then got the fore-tack down after a fashion, and hauled the sheet aft, ran aft to the wheel and put it hard over, then got the main-staysail loose and hoisted that; and now I dared not do more, for as the brig had no head-sail it would have been madness to loose the main-topsail, the effect of which must certainly have been to throw her up in the wind and deaden any progress the other sails might give her.

All this while the raft was drifting closer and closer; it was now not more than two cables' length distant. The smoke was pouring in such dense volumes right across the main-deck as nearly to suffocate me when I passed through it, and every now and again the fall of a flaming plank into the glowing hollow of the pile would send up a thick shower of sparks, and every moment

I expected to see a flame shoot up aloft or on deck.

Standing at the wheel, I took the bearings of the raft; but some minutes passed and I did not find that the brig moved. I was then for lowering a boat, getting a line over the bows of the brig, and attempting to tow her; but my judgment pronounced against the undertaking as hopeless, for the boat was herself quite as much as a single pair of oars could manage, and what conceivable impulse would my slender strength communicate to a hull of two hundred tons, full of water?

I cannot express the dismay and horror that seized me as I watched the raft drifting down upon the hull, which the bearings of the fire showed to be motionless. It was true I could take refuge in the quarter-boat, but the idea of finding myself adrift on this great ocean in a small open boat was horrible to me. I cursed myself over and over again for my folly in firing this raft; for now, so far from it benefiting me as a beacon, it was likely to destroy me. This wrecked and submerged hull, that was hateful before,

became now inexpressibly precious, and I stamped my foot repeatedly in my rage and agony of mind that the wind should be strong enough to give movement to the raft and not strong enough to drive the hull forward by so much as a foot.

I was beginning utterly to despair, and, indeed, was about to leave the wheel in order to stock the boat with water and food ready to launch her, when the flames suddenly leapt up with surprising brilliancy and energy, roaring at the same time like a wild beast, and the smoke drove down flat upon the water. A moment after, I felt the freshening breeze against my hot face; and, after a very short interval, the bearings of the raft shifted, and the fire veered towards the quarter. It was not above eighty yards distant, and the heat of it, with all that space between, was like the sun's at noon. This veering motion continuing, proved that the brig was forging ahead; and when, by the lifting and swelling of the canvas, as well as by the change in the position of the raft, this was proved beyond a doubt, I thought I should go mad

with joy. I uttered a loud shout, and actually danced about in my transports. No language could convey my delight. After the frightful suspense, the relief, so to speak, was intolerable. I had to shout and dance to give vent to myself, so overwhelming were the emotions excited in me by this sudden deliverance from a horrid danger, which I had only a minute before thought inevitable.

And still I was not out of danger either, for the wind that was urging the brig was also impelling the raft with great rapidity, and it was now close aboard on the port quarter; and though I knew I should clear it, my transports were suddenly arrested by the long licking forks of flame, which quivered and ran up in the air to the height of fifteen and twenty feet, and which threatened the stern of the brig as they leaned along the wind. And God knows whether I should have escaped after all, if it had not been that, just when the raft was so close that the heat of the flames drove me from the wheel, the under tiers gave way and the whole top weight fell

with a crash, several of the flaming planks plunging with a fierce hissing into the water. The flames drooped, a great cloud of smoke soared up and passed over the stern of the brig as though a fire had broken out in the after-hold. In a few moments the flames burst out again, and, like serpents disappointed of their prey, forked their long flaming heads many feet above the sea, with such glancings and leapings and long, eager, forward writhings as the wind blew them aslant like blades of India grass in a breeze, as might have scared the bravest man in the world to see.

But the danger was past. The raft had gone clear of the stern of the brig, and the steady, though moderate, wind was setting the glowing mass steadily away upon the starboard quarter.

I watched it for some time, until it was a quarter of a mile distant. In spite of a portion of the fuel having gone overboard, it was flaming grandly again, and was indeed a noble beacon; whirling the fire-sparks on high, and reddening the air all around it, and illuminating a wide area of

the sea. Indeed, coming suddenly upon it, and being ignorant of its character, I should have taken it for a ship on fire,—and, for that matter, a great ship too, for the bottom part of the glowing mass was so close to the water, that there was no telling whether it was one or five miles off; and although I knew it could not be further from the brig than a quarter of a mile, yet it seemed close to the horizon, and like a thousand-ton ship on fire there.

Now that the brig was safe from all risk of collision with the blazing raft, I thought it would be foolish to keep her under sail, and defeat the object I had in view in constructing the fire-raft, by sailing away from it. So I put the helm down, and went forward and hauled down the staysail and clewed up the fore-topsail, first squaring the yards; and, by means of buntlines and leechlines and the other ropes which are attached to the large sails of vessels, I snugged the canvas as well as I could manage, and so left them ready for setting in the morning, should my beacon fail to attract any ship during the night.

I was desperately wearied, having done a great deal of hard work that day, and the excitement and terror aroused in me by the drifting of the raft had greatly added to my exhaustion. But I was so anxious to judge how long the raft was likely to remain burning that I determined to watch it for a spell ; and, in order to keep myself awake, I mixed myself a bumper of brandy and filled a pipe, and went on to the top of the deck-house.

The brig was now as motionless again as a log upon the water, yet there was a very smart and pleasant breeze blowing from the eastward—it was, indeed, due east—and the sky was beginning to clear under it ; and there was a rich, greenish sparkle in the larger stars, with now and again a regular shower of meteors. But the sea was an ocean of ink, on the surface of which was the haunting glimmer of phosphorus, as the little wavelets, after running a moment or two, broke and subsided with a seething as soft as the purling of a summer brook. From the appearance of the sky all day, and the sudden shift of wind, I believed

this easterly breeze bade fair to last ; if so, then there might be the merest chance of my being able to head a course for Juan Fernandez, though I had but little hope of getting the water-logged brig to sail on a wind. And yet it would not do to let her run before it, for, the parallel on which the brig lay being so far south, I should meet with no land before I came to New Zealand. In other words, by heading west, the nearest point of land would be about five thousand miles distant ! Therefore it would be better for me to let the brig lie under bare poles until a favourable wind arose, that would either blow me into the track of ships or to the land. But, then, how long might I be kept waiting for a favourable wind ? Indeed, my course was plain. In the morning, my first duty would be to make the best job I could of clearing the foremast ; and then, supposing the wind held easterly, clap on what sail I could make, brace the yards up, and head north, and take my chance of leeway.

These were my thoughts as I sat smoking on the deck-house, with my eyes fixed

on the raft, that still blazed finely, and gave promise of holding out for a long time yet. But nature was no longer to be denied; my head sank on my breast, and I was startled out of a doze by my pipe falling on to the deck. As I stooped blindly to pick it up, I felt that sleep I must, let what would happen. The dew was heavy, and my health and strength too important to suffer me to lie on deck all night without protection. But before I entered the cabin, I hauled down the lantern from the mast-head, trimmed it afresh, and ran it up again; and then, with another look at the raft, that resembled a solid ball of fire on the black water, I quitted the deck, took the bolster and mattress from the mate's bunk—being entirely free from, and indeed a great deal too wearied to feel any superstitious qualms—and laid myself down on the deck close against the cabin door, ready for any emergency that might call me forth.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SURVIVORS OF THE "WALDERSHARE."

I FELL asleep instantly and slept profoundly, and I must have been asleep four hours, when I had a dream.

I dreamt I was watching the flaming raft, and perceiving with grief and vexation that it was dwindling into a smaller and smaller light, whilst at the same time it was drifting further and further away from me, when the glow of it was suddenly obscured by the hull and sails of a passing ship, which were of an inky black as they passed this side the red haze. I endeavoured to shriek out in order to attract the attention of the people aboard the vessel, but my tongue refused to stir; I could only utter a husky sound like the moan of a man who is being strangled; and I was forced to watch with

intolerable anguish of mind the receding vision of the ship, unable to utter a sound loud enough to reach her. Suddenly the raft flared up, the flames grew gigantic, the sky was filled with smoke, spangled with millions of sparks of the size of stars, the sea all around it caught fire, and, like the dry grass of a flaming prairie, an innumerable host of fiery tongues came sweeping down to the brig, in the very midst of which I beheld a large boat full of men, armed to the teeth, menacing me with their weapons as they came; whilst the water poured away in streams of red fire on either bow, and flashed in the eyes and in the metal-tipped arms of the hellish crew, who rushed with the rapidity of wind down upon the brig. I saw them coming; I marked the flames hissing and crackling as they fired the water; I felt the heat of them scorching my face; and in an agony of terror I turned and rushed forward in order to throw myself overboard, gained the forecastle, sprang with all my strength—and sat bolt upright and wide awake, trembling and with the sweat pouring down my face like water.

There were two figures standing at the cabin door, a man and a woman. They appeared transfixed. I looked at them for one moment with speechless amazement, at the next with speechless horror. As I live to write it, my belief was that I was either stark, raving mad, or that I was *dead*, my soul disembodied, and beholding a vision that formed no part of this life.

A sharp, wild cry, in a voice that I would have known among a thousand, rang through the cabin and brought me to a sense of the reality of the thing as swiftly as the eyes, blinded by the hand, behold the light when the hand is removed. I sprang to my feet, and in an instant I had my sweetheart on my breast in a dead swoon.

"Mr. Lee," exclaimed a husky voice, "water, for God A'mighty's sake—water for her and water for us!"

"Unhook this swinging lamp," I said, "and take it forward; the scuttle-butts are on the starboard side of the galley. You will find a bottle on one of them that will serve as a dipper. Drink moderately, for

your life's sake, and get a pannikin from the galley and bring it aft, filled."

It was Sinnet, the boatswain of the *Waldershare*, who had spoken. I knew him by his voice, rasping as it was, though I never lifted my eyes from Nelly's face. He unhooked the lamp, and I heard a scamper of feet as three or more men bounded forward.

Whilst I waited for water to be brought aft, I adjusted the blanket on the deck, meanwhile supporting Nelly with one arm, and then laid her tenderly down, with her head upon the pillow; and by the time this was done, the boatswain entered with a pannikin full of water. I took it from him, and told him to hang up the lamp; and, whilst I raised Nelly's head and moistened her lips with water, I bade him pour some brandy from the jar that stood upon the table into the tumbler I had used before I lay down to sleep; and, with no man speaking a word—for a hasty glance at the cabin door had shown me two other figures standing there—I bathed Nelly's forehead with the brandy, and kept on

moistening her lips with the water, into which I also poured a little brandy, until she sighed deeply and opened her eyes and looked at me.

I told her not to attempt to speak, and put the pannikin to her lips. I let her drink as much as I thought she ought to take, for the husky voice of the boatswain had given me a hint of sufferings which had been protracted; and perceiving with intense joy the good this draught had done her, I let her sink back on the pillow. I then started up, threw open the door of the store-room, and brought out a handful of biscuits and some tins of preserved meat. The moment the men saw the biscuits, they sprang forward and grapped them out of my hand, and fell to cramming their mouths. I let them look to themselves, and put some meat and white tin biscuits before Nelly, and had the exquisite happiness of seeing her sitting up and eating.

All this time not a word was said. We were English sailors, not Germans nor Frenchmen. We wanted no explanations; everything was understood, or as much was

understood as was needful at that time. The only question I asked was, "Are these all of you, Sinnet?" indicating the men who stood pale and famished at the table, eating like wolves; and the boatswain answered, "Four of us, sir," nodding towards Nelly, that I might know he included her in the four.

My sweetheart had no covering to her head, otherwise she was completely dressed; and over her shoulders was a large plaid shawl, dark and clinging with the saturating dew. She was terribly white, with a pitiful, wasted look; but whenever she raised her eyes, she had a smile for me—a smile so sweet, so glad, so full of joyous surprise, that I can only compare it to the expression on the face of a child that has died painlessly.

However, I would not suffer her to speak. I knew what she wanted, and what was indeed most imperatively needful to her; and I went at once to the captain's cabin, and taking the bedclothes from the hammock, I prepared the bunk for her; and the moment she had made an end of her

repast, I took her hand and led her to the cabin, just whispering, "My blessed one, I cannot guess what you have suffered, but I know that sleep is as necessary to you as food and drink;" and lifting her in my arms I laid her in the bunk, and kissing her cold cheek, I closed the door and left her.

"God be praised for finding this brig and you aboard of her, Mr. Lee!" exclaimed the boatswain, running up to me and, in the wildness and delight of his feelings, grasping my hand. "Another day must ha' done for the poor lady; I don't know even that she would have gone through this night, sir."

"What has become of the *Waldershare*?" I asked.

"She's at the bottom of the ocean, sir," replied Sinnet, catching his breath.

"*What!*" I exclaimed, in a low, amazed voice, staring round upon the pale faces of the men, who nodded as they met my eye.

"Ay, sir; a few hours after we lost sight of this brig," said the boatswain, "the ship took the ground. There was nothen' to be

seen, no breakers, not a westige o' reef above water. She plumped upon it, goin' five knots at the time, fit to break her in two, and I could hear the water rooshing into her forrards like a torrent over a dam. Oh, Mr. Lee, it's an awful pity—an awful pity, sir! God A'mighty knows why and how it happened, but I heard Mr. Thomas say there was no reefs marked down in the charts within five hundred mile o' that place."

He sighed heavily, and passed the back of his great hairy hand over his eyes. I was burning with curiosity to hear more of the story, but it would have been cruel to keep the poor fellows standing and talking after what they had gone through.

"You shall tell me all about it, bo'sun, after you have taken some rest," said I. "There are blankets in those berths there—go and turn in; and you two," addressing the others, "must make shift in this berth," indicating the carpenter's. And then looking at my watch, I told them I should need no more sleep that night, and would keep a look-out.

I had never beheld men so exhausted.

One of them had no cap, and his black hair hung in streaks over his bloodless forehead; whilst his eyes still glowed with the fever that thirst had kindled in them; and his ribs and the sharp angles of his collar-bone and shoulders were clearly marked on the thin, dew-soaked shirt that, with a pair of canvas trousers, formed his dress.

Before I went on deck, I opened the door of Nelly's cabin very quietly, and crept to the side of the bunk and looked at her. The reflection of the lamp streamed in through the open door, so that her face was quite plain. She was sound asleep, and breathing deeply. Her hair had fallen loose, or she had loosed it herself, and it lay in a great heap on the bolster. I touched her hand and found it warm, and felt her dress (I had let her shawl slip off her shoulders when I laid her in the bunk), and noticed that only the lower part of it was damp; and as she was completely covered, I reckoned her underclothing would protect her against the dampness of the dress.

The mind of a sailor, used to danger and

to sharp contrasts, grows quickly accustomed to change, and by this time the events of the last half-hour had become familiar, and I no longer felt the astonishment, I may say the awe, that had possessed me when I opened my eyes on the figure of my sweetheart. Yet there was an exultation in my heart, a quick beating, a play of grateful delight. Before I had fallen asleep I was mourning for Nelly and crying out for the sound of a human voice; now I had her with me again, and the precious companionship of men to help me to use the wreck as a means of saving our lives. It was hard to believe, and yet it was all true; and it was no surprising coincidence either when I considered that the *Waldershare* could not have been many miles distant from the brig when she sunk.

I stepped on to the deck; it was still very dark, and the wind blowing a steady, pleasant breeze from the eastward, the sky clear, and the sea smooth. The green light at the masthead had burned clearly, but my fire-raft was gone, and the ocean stretched a mighty unbroken shadow around.

Hearing the peculiar sound of the wobble and splash of water alongside, I brought the cabin lamp to the port bulwark and looked over, and there saw one of the *Waldershare's* quarter-boats bobbing up and down under the gangway. They had made her painter fast to one of the chain-plates forward. I hauled her round to the lee side of the brig, that she might lie under shelter until we could hoist her up in the place of the boat that had been broken and washed away.

Until the dawn broke I remained patiently on deck, sometimes smoking, sometimes walking, sometimes ascending as high as the main-top to have a look around, thinking all the time over the loss of the *Waldershare*, and wondering what had become of Thomas and the rest of the people, and often thanking God for His gracious providence in directing to the brig that one of all the souls aboard the ship whom I would have laid down my life to save.

As the sun rose, turning the whole of the eastern sea into molten silver, I again

from the masthead scanned the ocean, not knowing but that one or more of the *Waldershare's* boats might be in sight, and heartily praying that my little forlorn wreck might be the means of rescuing more lives, when, on looking down, I perceived the boatswain gazing up at me.

"Do you see anything of the long-boat, sir?" he called out.

I replied that nothing was in sight, and immediately descended to the deck. I asked him how he felt; he answered, himself again, after his sleep. The other men were not awake, and I would not have them disturbed.

"We are not out of the mess yet," said I, "and we have all our work before us, and we shall need all our strength too. Tell me now about the *Waldershare*."

He began by saying that when I put off with the two men to board the brig, all hands were on deck watching me. From the superior height of the *Waldershare*, they had been able to notice the appearance of the weather to windward when the sky still looked clear to me, and he for one was

surprised, when the breeze first came down, that Mr. Thomas did not insist on my returning. He was on the quarter-deck, looking over the rail of the bulwarks, when the boat put off from the brig, and he heard Mr. Thomas, who was looking at her through a glass, say to Mr. Black that he couldn't make out what the men were doing; that they were sculling the boat, and that there were only two men in her.

The boatswain felt sure that something was wrong, but nothing could be known for certain until the boat had run down to the ship, partly sculled and partly blown along by the wind. The moment Mr. Thomas heard the men's story, he swung the yards, and headed to make a long board so as to fetch the brig to windward; but presently the squall came thundering down, and though all hands were on deck and everything let go, in order to save their spars, they had to put the helm up and run for it, until they had clewed up and hauled down; and by the time they had got the yards round again, the brig was a long way to windward.

However, they went on ratching, and to give her way Mr. Thomas cracked on ; but just before it fell dark, and when the ship was on the starboard tack, the wind shifted and blew with great violence dead on end from the brig. This forced them to wear ship—for she would not stay under the canvas then on her—and brace up on the port tack, the vessel's head then lying south by west. The wind increasing, they were obliged to furl the mizzen-topsail and stow the inner jib ; but Mr. Thomas told the boatswain he had the bearings of the brig, that there was no great risk of Mr. Lee coming to harm, and that by daybreak he hoped to be hove to close to windward of the wreck.

It was four bells in the middle watch, the night dark and still blowing very fresh, and the ship heading S.S.W. and making a great deal of leeway, when the boatswain, who was asleep in his bunk, was awakened by a horrible grating sound. In a moment a dozen voices yelled out that the ship had struck, and was foundering. Everybody's first impression was that they had run

down the brig. The boatswain rushed on deck, and at the same time the vessel heeled heavily over to starboard. He believed that she was going down, and that it was all over with them. However, in a few seconds she righted, but the confusion on deck was frightful. Madam Espinosa had rushed up in her night-dress and stood shrieking at the break of the poop, and everybody was yelling out; there was no order, no discipline. It was pitch dark, and the seas breaking heavily over the weather bulwarks; the sails thundered overhead, and amidst all could be heard the rushing of water into the ship's hold.

Mr. Thomas was quite cool, and stood in the waist shouting to the men to get the long-boat hoisted out whilst there was time. This he succeeded in getting done, but no sooner was she alongside than there was a rush, and a whole crowd of men jumped into her; however, although the sea was breaking heavily over the vessel, the long-boat lay comparatively safe under the shelter of the lee bulwarks, and the boatswain saw, as he believed, all the passengers get into her.

Whether Mr. Thomas got into her or not, the boatswain could not say, but not knowing that Nelly was still aboard, he (the boatswain) was about to drop over the side, when the long-boat went adrift, and in a moment vanished into the surrounding darkness. Perceiving this, he sprang aft to the port quarter-boat, where he found two of the men busy at the falls; there he saw Nelly standing by them, perfectly calm and quiet. He raised her in his arms and put her into the boat, and one of the men also jumped in. He and the other man then lowered the boat, and when she was unhooked (this boat, it will be remembered, unhooked herself), they got into her by going down the falls. They then threw their oars out and rowed, so as to get clear of the broken water that twice half-filled the boat, but they kept as close under the lee of the ship as they could, so as to get the benefit of the shelter she offered; and there they lay riding to their oars, which they made into a bundle, until the dawn broke, shortly after which the ship slid off the reef into deep water, and went down as upright as if she had been on

the stocks, the main-royal truck being the last thing seen of her.

Both the captain's gig and the starboard quarter-boat were washing about bottom up, but there was not a living thing to be seen, and no signs of the long-boat. The boat-swain said it was impossible to tell what the loss of life was. Had there been less confusion and more discipline, every man might have got away safe. He believed that several of the crew were drowned in the rush for the long-boat; he was almost sure that Mr. Thomas jumped into her, believing that the two lady passengers were there, and that he could do no good by sticking to the vessel. The fact of the other boats having been lowered proved that some of the crew had endeavoured to save their lives by those means, and that they had either capsized in the lowering, or been upset by the sea, which was very heavy to windward of the ship.

It fell calm after sunrise; but the sun that brought them comfort at first added to their misery afterwards, for they lay roasting under it without a drop of water or a

morsel of food in the boat. They had but two oars, but had they had fifty they could have made no use of them; for where should they row? in what direction should they turn the boat's head? They knew they were hundreds of miles distant from any land, and the boatswain said that it almost drove him mad, so that he barely restrained himself from jumping overboard when he thought of the unfrequented seas which surrounded them, how many days might pass before a vessel should heave in sight, and how, meanwhile, they were without food and drink.

He said that throughout Nelly was wonderfully brave, and patient, and calm, and was constantly calling upon them to keep up their hearts as they sat idly in the boat, hopelessly gazing around the horizon. And, indeed, the suggestion that ultimately saved their lives came from her, for she spoke of the brig, and asked the boatswain if he thought that vessel had lived through the night; and on the boatswain answering that as she was full of timber she could not sink unless she broke up, she asked why they

should not try to find her; and at this simple question all three men raised a shout, as though the brig had actually then hove in sight.

He said that Nelly's judgment was marvellous, that she talked like a true sailor, and asked questions that greatly helped him to determine the approximate bearing of the brig. One of the men in the boat was at the wheel of the *Waldershare* when the brig was sighted, and he said he would take his oath she lay due south when the squall struck the ship. Then they made a calculation how far they had ratched to the eastwards and how far to the westwards, and they arrived at the conclusion that the brig bore about ten miles south-east when the wind shifted after the *Waldershare* had gone about. With a pencil she found in her pocket, Nelly drew a circle on the stern-sheets, and the boatswain helped to make a compass of it, showing the position of the brig as nearly as their memory would help them to arrive at it at the time when the shift of wind came; they then reckoned how long they had stood to the southward

on the port tack and the speed of the ship at the time, and by their calculations they brought the ship to lie about sixteen miles south-west of the brig when she struck, and that being so they reckoned that the wreck bore about N.N.E. from them.

As by this time the sun was high, and they had nothing to steer by, they determined to wait until sunset in order to know how to head the boat ; and then steering so as to bring the sun on the port quarter, they took to their oars and rowed steadily, using the stars as a guide. They continued rowing for several hours, but the men grew so exhausted at last, and so mad with thirst, that they could row no longer ; and now they had to wait for the morning before they could tell if the brig was in sight. But although she could undoubtedly have been seen from the deck of a ship, and although, as I afterwards reflected, the boat must have been within the horizon when I ascended to the royal yard to look around, but too small a speck to be visible even with the glass, yet, as they could see nothing of her, their hearts utterly failed them, for

they believed that their quest would be useless, and that they might go on rowing until they dropped dead at their oars without the wreck heaving in view.

This was their second day in the boat, and towards the afternoon one of the men jumped overboard, but was fished out of the water by the boatswain. After he had lain a while in the boat he said the water had done his thirst good, and this made the others get over the side and soak themselves, and it also relieved them; but whatever Nelly's sufferings were, she said she could endure them; and she proved that she could do so, indeed, for until she could no longer articulate with her dry tongue, she was urging them not to lose hope, and advised them to take to the oars again when the night fell, as she said (and they all agreed with her) that the brig could not possibly be many miles distant. So when it fell dark they had another spell at the oars, and the little breeze that blew astern helped them along in the direction they had decided to steer.

It was about half-past ten, as near as the

boatswain could recollect, that they first sighted the red light thrown upon the air by the fire-raft. They believed it was a ship on fire, and pulled towards it with hearty good will, hoping to fall in with other boats. After they had rowed for some time the wind changed and blew directly against them, and this retarded their progress considerably; however, they persevered, with many intermissions, and the fire-raft setting their way, they saw what it was, and it puzzled them exceedingly. At last the boatswain said they were planks from the wreck, and that it was likely Mr. Lee had made up that fire, and if so, the brig could not be far off. He had scarcely said this when Nelly caught sight of the green light and pointed to it, being unable to speak. Shortly afterwards the brig herself loomed into view, and in about six hours' rowing from the time they had taken to the oars on the night falling, they got alongside the brig and boarded her.

Such was the boatswain's story, told not as I have put it, but in language infinitely more picturesque, and rendered moving by

words and gestures which thrust deeply home into me the horrors and sufferings they had passed through. And now how could I sufficiently thank God for inspiring me with the idea of the fire-raft? for had it not been for sighting that blaze, it is fifty to one but that they would have missed the brig and drifted a while and perished.

"Ay, sir," said the boatswain, "it is true enough that your raft saved our lives; but if it hadn't been for the lady putting the idea into our heads of looking for the brig, and helping us to find her by her calculations, that raft would have done us no good, for we should never have drawn near enough to sight the flare."

"Any way, you saved her life in the first instance, Sinnet," said I, "by putting her in the quarter-boat; and whether you have guessed it or not, I'll tell you now, that that girl is my sweetheart, and dearer to me than I can explain to you; but for standing by her, Sinnet, take my hand—take my hand, man, and with it my thanks—ay, boatswain, my deepest thanks—and may God bless you!"

I wrung his hand passionately, blinded a moment by a moisture in my eyes; then, clapping him on the back, I cried, "Now, bo'sun, let us light the galley fire and get breakfast. There's enough provisions aboard this little craft to last us six months. We'll afterwards turn to and make her ship-shape forwards, and if we can't get her to sail, bo'sun, we'll drive her, eh?—we'll drive her, deep as she is."

In a few minutes we had the fire blazing and the small copper filled. We carried the cooked salt meat I had found in the big copper aft, and prepared the breakfast; indeed, I felt myself a host, and was anxious to gladden the eyes of my sweetheart and shipmates by the show of good provisions I was able to put before them; moreover, my term of loneliness had made my heart wonderfully tender to the men. I put questions to Sinnet for no other reason than that I might hear his voice, and my joy at having companions was so great that I would often laugh loudly, and my heels were so light that I felt no deck beneath me.

Whilst we were at work preparing the table, the two seamen came out of the carpenter's berth. Strangely enough, they had both belonged to my watch, and were both of them Englishmen, steady, smart fellows; their names were Robert Johnson and William Matthews. I stepped over and gripped them one after the other by the hand.

"We have been watchmates before," said I, "and we shall be watchmates again, men. We know one another, and that's a good job, for we shall be able to pull together as we did aboard the poor old *Waldershare*. Mates, I hope your rest has brightened you up?"

"Ay, sir, we're both of us men again," they answered; and then Matthews said, "We're hearty glad to see you well and doing, sir. Nary man o' the whole watch, Mr. Lee, but would ha' gone on cruising for months and months on half-'lowance and half-pay to have got you back again."

"Ay, ay," responded Johnson, "Bill speaks gospel in that, Mr. Lee. Though it looked a bad business in the first start, it

were a bloomin' good job arter all that you *was* left aboard this here brig; leastways, I speak for ourselves and the lady, sir; and I for one say Lord bless her, for the way she heartened us up and forced us to save ourselves."

"The same here!" exclaimed the boat-swain.

She opened her cabin door at this minute and came out. I sprang forward and grasped her hands. The weary expression had gone from her face; she was indeed still very pale, but her eyes were bright and her smile was quick and sweet, and full of life, as I ran to meet her. She had managed to coil and smooth down her hair, and adjusted her dress in some clever fashion so as to make herself look as fresh as though she had but left her toilet-table. Her paleness took nothing away from what in my sight was the handsomest womanly face in the world, and it only made her smile the sweeter by colouring it with a little shadow of sorrowful tenderness. I was immensely glad to find her up and looking well, for, to speak the truth, it was hard to guess whether

a serious illness would not follow the mental and physical sufferings she had endured, and some bitter misgivings on that head had troubled me whilst the boatswain related his story, though I kept them to myself. However, it was certain now that the repose she had taken had brought her very much to herself again, and I believed that another day of rest, and such nourishing food as I could find to give her, would clear away all the lingering ill effects of her forty-eight hours' exposure in the boat.

I whispered some greetings to her—for though we had much to say, this was not the moment to say it in—and led her to the table, where the men stood respectfully by. I made them all sit down, saying with a laugh that, in a smooth sea and with a clear sky, all the watching a water-logged vessel wants is through the skylight; and the five of us made a great breakfast, there being, indeed, a plentiful supply of food on the table—salt beef, ship's bread, white biscuits, preserved meat, tea, sugar, preserved milk in tins, and some very good marmalade.

I was anxious that the men should fare

heartily, as the preservation of their strength was of the utmost importance to us all ; and they certainly did not disappoint my wishes, though the boatswain, sticking a fork into a piece of junk, and keeping his knife poised, exclaimed, " Mr. Lee, we're in your hands, sir, and you know better than us what provisions there is aboard this brig. Only say the word, sir, and me and my mates will go on any 'lowance you may think right ;" whereat the other men, hungry as they were, stopped eating, and laid down their knives to await my answer.

I replied that I had overhauled the stores, and found there was enough to last the five of us some months without stint—at least, that was my calculation ; any way, I meant that there should be no stint that morning, as there was a heavy day's work before us. I also proposed that Miss Maitland (for I thought it best to call her by the name the boatswain knew her by) should have charge of the store-room, and reckon up the quantity of provisions in it, and we would leave the dividing of it to her discretion. The men then went on with their breakfast.

During the meal we talked a great deal of the *Waldershare*. Nelly said that when the vessel struck she was not undressed, but sitting in her cabin, having left the deck about a quarter of an hour, where she had been looking out for the brig. She had removed her hat, but kept her shawl on, and when the ship struck she ran out of her cabin. The other passengers were in bed. She never once saw Mr. Thomas, though she heard his voice on the main-deck.

"I sighted a ship yesterday," said I, "at dinner time, and I am hoping that she may have picked up the long-boat. She was standing up from the southward. Did you see anything of her?"

"Nothing at all, sir," answered Sinnet.

"Had the long-boat a sail aboard?"

"Yes," said the boatswain; "just as she went adrift I saw them stepping the mast."

"Had she any water?"

"There were two small water-casks in her, one in the bows and one aft," answered the boatswain; "but God A'mighty knows if

there was anything in 'em, or whether they filled 'em afore they launched her."

"And twenty people in her, you say?" I exclaimed with a shudder, as I thought of this mass of human beings cooped up in one small boat without food or water.

However, it would not do to let myself grow miserable over what was after all but a mere probability. I considered Mr. Thomas too experienced a seaman to launch the boat without watering and provisioning her, although the boatswain could not say he had seen this done; then, there was the chance of their having been picked up by the vessel I had sighted; and besides, our own plight was serious enough to demand all my sympathy and attention too, and I considered that, whilst I sat shuddering over the fate of the occupants of the long-boat, they might be safe on board some vessel, while here were five of us on a water-logged brig, that at any moment might play us a devilish trick and set us all squattering on the water.

When the men had done their breakfast, I gave them each a stick of tobacco, and

told the boatswain to hoist the *Waldershare's* boat to the starboard davits, and afterwards go forward and have a look at the fore-topmast, and make ready to clear away the wreckage there.

The moment they were out of the cabin, I took Nelly in my arms and kissed her again and again. When I reflected that she had undertaken this voyage out of her great love for me, and that the bitter sufferings she had just gone through would have been escaped by her had she not loved me so well and proved her devotion by following me, I was overcome, and could not speak to her for some moments.

"Will," she exclaimed, as she laid her face, streaming with tears, on my breast, "does not this meeting prove that it is God's wish we should be together? Think how slight an accident might have separated us for ever. When the boat came back without you, and I heard that you had been left on this wreck, I thought my heart had broken. I went down into my cabin, believing that I should go mad if I did not cry, and I did not want them to see me

cry on deck ; but I could not cry : I felt as if I had been changed into stone. I thought that you were lost to me for ever, and I said to myself, 'It was my fault ; I urged him to go ; he only went to please me.' When the ship struck and I ran on deck, I was quite calm. As you were not with me, as you might be dead—for I heard Mr. Thomas tell Mr. Black in the cabin that he feared you would be swept off the wreck, over which he said he had seen the waves dashing furiously—I felt that I ought to die, and I longed to die ; I made no effort to save myself. But, Will, it was God's intention that you should go to the wreck in order that we might come together. We are together once more now, my beloved ; and oh, my darling, we must not be parted again—we must not be parted again ! ”

“Have no fear, Nelly ; we shall not be parted again,” I exclaimed, fondling and soothing her ; and then I made her sit down, and, to calm her, talked of our chances of escape and of my plans. I then gave her a description of my life aboard the brig from the hour I had been left on her, and

by the time I had done she had dried her eyes, and was watching and listening to me with her sweet, affectionate smile.

I now insisted on her lying down and taking thorough rest for the remainder of the day. The captain's berth was to be hers; there was every convenience of furniture in it, and with a very little trouble it was to be made as comfortable as her cabin in the *Waldershare*. It was true, she only had the clothes she stood in, but she was a sailor's daughter and a sailor's sweetheart, and could make handsome shift on small matters. Nay, there was a broad straw hat in the mate's cabin which I fetched and gave her, saying that although I was afraid we should not be able to find any feathers fit for a lady to wear, there were needles and thread in the lockers; and I would leave her to overhaul the cabins for such trimmings as she might find to please her. This set us both laughing, and with another kiss we separated, she promising to lie down and remain resting in the bunk until I gave her leave to get up.

If this were all pure fiction I should not

spare any pains to prove to you, out of the experiences of others, that this meeting of my sweetheart and myself, after the endurance of so many perils, was a circumstance infinitely less surprising than hundreds of the coincidences in which naval story abounds. The sea is full of astonishments, but that is because of its restlessness. A seaman, drowned a hundred miles out at sea, is cast up on the shore at the very feet of his sweetheart or wife, who stands thinking of him and longing for the day to come when they shall meet again. A man, losing his passage by one ship, follows by another, and during the voyage he passes a wreck, and finds it the ship in which he was to have taken his journey. A sailor is washed overboard in the middle of the Atlantic, is believed to be drowned, and his clothes are sold; and when the vessel arrives in port, the first man who steps aboard of her is this sailor, who comes to fetch his clothes. Incidents which strike the landsman as specimens of great extravagance are read by the seaman with grave faith; for it is fifty to one but that,

if he is an old sailor, he will be able to top the most miraculous adventure with an experience a great deal more astonishing. Hence the fascination of the sea to those who have something more than a smattering acquaintance with its life. Dr. Johnson believed in the Cock Lane ghost, but contemptuously rejected the story of the Libson earthquake. It is easier to get some landsmen to believe in the Flying Dutchman than in maritime coincidences which any real sailor would accept as facts.

I had been a good deal cheered, whilst talking to Nelly, by hearing the hearty "Yeo heave ho!" of the men as they hoisted the boats to the davits. It made me feel that I had help and companions as nothing else that I can imagine would have done. They were forward when I left the deck-house, and I found the boatswain in the eyes of the brig, taking a squint aloft.

"Do you know, Mr. Lee," said he, "that this is a wonderfully well-built boat? I can't tell what her run is like, but I never see handsomer bulwarks on a craft of her size; and look at her spars, sir! no naval

dockyard ever turned out anything finer. It's a treat to see the way in which her main rigging is set up; and everything aboard of her is first-rate—more fit for a gentleman's yacht than a timber-brig."

"True," I answered; "though I'd swop all her finery for a sound hull. Now, men, I'll tell you what my plans are. I propose that we turn to at once, and cut away that raffle up there. I can see a spare-boom on the galley yonder that would make us a good topmast; but as there is enough hoist left in the stump to enable us to carry a single-reefed sail, I'm for letting it stand—at all events, for the present. We shall want all the head-sail we can carry, and so we must turn to and run out a jibboom. There's a big chest of tools in the foremost berth, and anything you want in the way of saws, choppers, and the like you may have by fetching it. How this hull will sail I don't know; and I'm sorry to say there's no sextant aboard, and I shall have to do as best I can with dead reckoning. Any way, I calculate I'm within fifteen miles of the place where the *Waldershare*

first sighted this brig, so I've got my position on the chart, and find that the nearest land to us is the island of Juan Fernandez. But, as neither this wind that is blowing, nor any wind on the starboard hand, will allow this water-logged hull to head up for that island or the continent beyond, we must make her give us all the northing she will, and take our chance of being overhauled by a ship or getting a slant of wind that will run us into some port. How does my scheme sound?"

"I don't know that you can do anything better, sir," said the boatswain. "The further north you can drive this vessel, the better our chance of sighting ships."

"Just so, Sinnet. And so now, men, to work."

There were plenty of knives knocking about in the galley, and seizing each man one, the two seamen sprang aloft, and were presently busy cutting away the topmast rigging. All four of us working with hearty good will, we had soon got the wrecked mast along the deck, overhauled the running rigging, and cleared the foremast.

One of the men then went aloft with a tail block, which he made fast to the head of the broken topmast, and through this we rove the topsail halliards. Having securely stayed the mast, we broke out one of the spare-booms and got it forward; and all hands tailing on, we ran it through the bowsprit cap and firmly lashed it and steadied it with guys. A rigger, probably, would not have thought highly of our method of procedure, but our object was to make the best of a bad job. What figure the brig should cut under our hands did not trouble us. We wanted our work to be strong,—something that a stout breeze would not blow away. And by means of the watch-tackle and the capstan and the winch, we secured the topmast, bowsprit, and jibboom in a manner that satisfied me that, so far as they were concerned, we had nothing to fear from a gale of wind.

We knocked off at one o'clock for dinner. We had worked desperately hard all the morning, and were now ready to make sail. But an hour more or less would make no difference, and we were all tired and hungry

enough too, and felt that we had earned our dinner and a spell of rest besides.

We had kept the galley fire in, and during the morning I had stepped aft, and got a piece of salt pork out of a cask in the store-room and popped it into the copper. This was now cooked, and we carried it into the deck-house and made out a very respectable dinner-table, on which I placed a pannikin of rum. I bade the men fall to, and knocked on Nelly's door. She asked me to enter, and I found her standing in the cabin ready to come out, but waiting till I called her.

"Will," said she, "I have taken all the rest I need to-day; do not ask me to remain in this cabin. It will do me more good to be on deck; and, should you not be able to employ me, I promise not to be in the way."

I laughed at her earnestness, and, drawing her to the window, looked her in the face.

"Why, Nelly, you are not so pale as you were, and the tired look has left your eyes. Come, the extra rest *has* done you

good—admit it! But I will not force you to remain below. The breeze won't hurt you, and after dinner I will make you comfortable on deck."

So saying, I opened the door and brought her to the table. The men stood up when they saw her. Had she been a queen, they could not have paid her more homage than was expressed in their grateful, affectionate, and deferential manner.

We talked a good deal of our plans and of the brig, wondering where the leak was, and deploring that we could not get at it; for I said that could we only manage to bring her to Valparaiso, our misfortunes would have a profitable ending, for that I estimated the value of the brig and cargo, in addition to the property I had found aboard, at five thousand pounds, and our salvage money would be something to tassel the ends of our pocket-handkerchiefs with.

I do not know why I should particularly remember this meal, but I do. The picture of the interior of that little deck-house on this day is strongly engraved on my memory.

We had brought the extra chairs we required from the berths; and at the head of the table sat the writer of this yarn, and on the right of him his sweetheart; near her was the boatswain, and facing him the two seamen. We filled the little table; and it was handsomely covered too, all things considered. The boiled pork was very good, the biscuits crisp, the tinned meats were beef and mutton; and if some of us ate pickled onions with our hot salt pork, it is because ship's forecables are not renowned for breeding fastidious tastes.

The boatswain, having some sense of his position and the presence of a lady, had unrolled his shirt-sleeves and covered up his arms; but the two seamen seated themselves in the condition in which they had knocked off work—the breasts of their shirts wide open, their brown arms bare to the elbows, their foreheads glistening with the sweat of their honest toil, the palms of their hands treacle-coloured with the stain of tar—and yet God knows I should have been sorry to see their places filled by well-dressed gentlemen.

Those horny, rough, half-naked men, with their mossy breasts disclosed, and their hair hanging like rope-yarns over their eyes, were precious companions in my sight, and endeared to my heart by the fellowship and help they had brought to me in my loneliness.

I put a bottle of wine before Nelly and filled her half a tumbler, and took care that she made a good dinner. "Badly as the sea has used you, it has left you all your beauty," I whispered. Indeed, I spoke the truth; there was a touching softness and light in her fine eyes; her hair was all lustrous with the sun as she sat under the skylight; there was not a line nor curve of her figure that was not faultless. I cannot express the suggestion of charm, of grace, of elegance, that filled the quaint and solid little cabin when she occupied it; her beauty in it was like the decoration of flowers, and in her presence, such was the effect of the contrast, the rude and rough seamen lost the harsh realities of their garb and faces, and took the picturesque softness one sees in a painting of such figures.

I had noticed some long clay tobacco-pipes on the shelf in the carpenter's berth, and told the men to take them and go and smoke forward. When they were gone I said to Nelly, "Those men should have gold to eat, if it would do them any good. Think how precious they are to you and me. Imagine ourselves alone on this wreck!"

"They seem honest, quiet men," she answered. "Beyond their crying out now and again for water, I never heard any complaints from them while in the boat. It was Johnson who jumped overboard. I saw him look up and clasp his hands, and in a moment he sprang into the water. He had not spoken for a long while before he did this. Oh, Will, those were dreadful days!" She put her hands to her face.

"Yes, darling, but they are past now, and need be no more to you than a dream. I pray Heaven all may be well with Thomas and the others. Nell, you little thought, when you made up your mind at Burmarsh to follow me, that you would be tossed for two days and nights in a little open boat,

in the middle of the Pacific, and find your refuge on a wreck."

"Could I have foreseen everything I would still have come. My place is here, Will," says she, putting her arm *into* mine and nestling against me.

"Ay, Nell, *here*—heart to heart: but we *must* take care never to be separated again. But come—where is that hat I gave you this morning? I must fit you with it, for since you will not lie down you must e'en have your way and come on deck."

I stepped into the berth and brought out the hat; it was a large straw hat, almost new, and I put it on her.

"Why, Nelly, this is like the hat you used to wear in the garden at Burmarsh. You wore it that morning when you sang about a jolly sailor's life, eh, Nelly? Could you sing me that song again?"

"When I am in the mood for singing I'll give you something prettier than that," she answered; and then left me, to put the hat on with her own hands before a looking-glass, being as true a woman in little as in big things. Coming out of the cabin with

the hat on her head, she must needs asks me how it looked.

"There is nothing else to put on, or I would not wear such a thing, Will. I hope the men will not laugh at me."

"I hope not, indeed," said I; "but we must chance that."

I caught up a chair, and she followed me on to the deck, where I helped her up to the top of the deck-house, placed the chair for her, and put the telescope in her lap, saying that, as she wished to be useful, she might keep a look-out for ships.

Our next business was to get sail upon the brig. As we could not find more than two tail-blocks, we seized a jewel-block to the topmast head just under the halliards block, through which we rove the jib halliards, making the tack of the sail fast to the jibboom end. This jib was a big sail for so small a vessel, and held enough wind, as the sea-phrase goes, to last a Dutchman a week. The fore-topmast staysail we hoisted by means of a block seized to the forestay close against the mast, and set both sails as a smack does her foresail.

We next set the fore-topsail with a single reef in, that bringing the leeches taut with the yard hard against the tail-block at the masthead; we then bowsed the fore-tack down to the waterways with the jigger and hauled aft the sheet, and telling the boat-swain to get the main-staysail hoisted and to loose the topsail, I ran aft to the wheel.

The breeze had been wonderfully steady all day long, but had freshened somewhat within the last half-hour, enough to give a little extra nimbleness to the run of the small waves as they flashed into lines of foam under the sun, and crackled sharply in lops and spurtings against the deep side of the brig. The wind was due east, and being anxious to test the vessel's capacity of laying up, the yards were sharply braced and the head-sheets flattened.

However, before the main-topsail was hoisted she began to fall off, making no headway at all, but just slueing around as though her head were being warped to leeward. The main-topsail checked this uncomfortable behaviour somewhat, but by this time her head was at N.N.W.

"Get the main-tack boarded, bo'sun!" I sung out, and this was done.

"How does she answer now, sir?" said the boatswain.

"I'll be able to know better when you've set the mizzen," I answered.

This was a large sail, the sheet of which worked on an iron traveller affixed to the taffrail, instead of a boom. The foot of the sail just cleared the top of the deck-house, but I called to Nelly to come down while the men were setting it, and she came and stood alongside of me.

"Do you see that reel there with a line around it?" said I. "Bring it here, dear, will you? and in that little box just over it you will find a sand-glass."

Glad to be of use in any way, she fetched the log-line and glass and laid them on the deck ready. The brig, having this after canvas on her, ceased to fall off, and with the helm hard down was heading north by east.

"Is she going through the water at all, bo'sun?" I asked.

He took a squint over the side. "Why,

yes, she seems squelching a bit, sir. But it isn't head foremost, I'm afeard, Mr. Lee."

I asked Nelly to hold the wheel whilst I hove the log. I jumped on to the taffrail, whilst the boatswain held the reel and Matthews turned the glass. The stray of the line veered right to windward, with a small inclination astern.

"As nearly as I can make out," said I, "we are making about two and a half knots leeway and half a knot headway."

I dived into the cabin and brought up a chart. The three men came around me, Nelly remaining at the wheel.

"Here's the spot I reckon we are at," said I, placing my finger on a mark on the chart; "and here's the island of Juan Fernandez, bearing, as you may see, about N.E. If I thought," I said, looking around the horizon, "that this breeze would hold for a few days, I'd square away and head W.N.W. for the South Sea Islands. But any way it won't do to hold on in this fashion, for the lee helm we are carrying is choking a good mile an hour off the brig, and we shall do no good to let her drift dead to leeward

in this fashion. We're bound to have some control over her, or we may as well clew up and sit down and wait for something to happen. So let us try her with the yards braced aft. Johnson, jump forward and ease off the foresheets."

I took the helm from Nelly and put it over by a few strokes. The brig's head slowly fell off to N.W. by W. This brought the wind well on the quarter, and the yards were swung with a slight cant to windward.

"Matthews," said I, "loose the top-gallant sail and let us see what that will do for us."

In a few minutes this sail was sheeted home and the yard hoisted. We hove the log again and found the brig really sailing, doing three knots, and making about three points leeway.

"We must leave her at this, Sinnet," said I; "we can do no better. Luckily, she's making some northing, and should the wind veer to the westward we shall be able to run with it right over our stern for the island."

"Ay, sir; and upon my word, she's sailing

as I never reckoned she would," said he, looking at the broad oily wake left by the inert and sodden hull. "I'm dashed if I don't think now she'd go to windward of some of them English coasting colliers."

Although the reader may have seen a water-logged vessel, he will find it hard to realize our position unless he has actually stood aboard of one. It is true that by throwing the greater portion of our deck-load overboard, I had succeeded in giving the hull a rise of between six and seven inches; but this had only just raised the scupper-holes clear of the water, and every time the vessel rolled the water shot through these holes on to the deck as though squirted through a hose. Although the bulwarks protected the deck, they did not prevent one from feeling the terrible nearness of the mighty deep. When I stood upright, I could see the horizon standing high above the rail of the bulwarks, and looking aft, the sea sloped up into the sky like the side of a hill.

Used as I was to my situation, I never could glance over the side without a shock,

to find how close the ocean was aboard. Nor was the nearness of the sea the only thing that brought home the reality of its grim proximity; every movement of the vessel was so sluggish, there was such a sickly deadly inertness in her motion, every creak of the timbers being smothered in the water, that I kept on fancying that she was actually sinking under our feet; and so strong was this upon the boatswain and the two men who were not yet accustomed to the feel of her, and who were fresh from the bound and buoyancy of the *Waldershare*, that I saw them constantly directing their eyes towards the sea, and going to the side and looking over, to satisfy themselves that the bulwarks still showed the same height above water.

In addition to this, was the dreadful gurgle and sob and wash of the water in the hold, and it is impossible to describe the thrilling sensation this sound produced in the mind.

Drawing the boatswain away out of ear-shot of Nelly, I told him that I spent the first night I passed on the wreck in the main-top, as the waves combed over the

vessel in green seas, so that no living creature would have been able to hold on for five seconds; that should we meet with another gale the decks would undoubtedly be swept in the same way again; that we four men could, of course, take refuge in the rigging until the gale abated, but that I never could suffer Miss Maitland to remain up there; and that therefore, as the only place of refuge would be the deck-house, I proposed that, to guard against all risk of its fetching away, we should turn to and thoroughly secure it with guys. It was true it had stood two, if not more gales, but a third gale might sweep it overboard.

The boatswain thoroughly agreeing with me, we called the others, passed a number of lines round the house, and carried guys to the ring-bolts, to the mainmast, aft, and wherever we could find something to take a secure turn; and rousing everything taut with the jigger, by supper-time we had the deck-house so secured, that before it could be washed away the hull would have to go to pieces.

As the brig was under canvas, and a hand

would be wanted at the wheel, we arranged to divide ourselves into watches; the boatswain and William Matthews in one watch, and I and Robert Johnson in the other; we also agreed that each man in the watch should steer the brig for two out of the four hours. Johnson was at the wheel when this was arranged, and so I said that, as he was on deck, he and I would stand the remainder of the first watch—that is, from six to eight; or rather, as we none of us felt disposed to turn in at once, that the boatswain and Matthews should keep watch from eight till midnight, and then we would go on alternately.

We also took that opportunity to arrange about our sleeping-places. Nelly was to have the captain's cabin; the boatswain and I were to share the mate's berth, the boatswain swinging in the hammock which we took from the captain's berth, and I sleeping in the bunk; and the two seamen were to replace each other in the carpenter's bunk as their watches came round.

All these arrangements being completed to our satisfaction, the boatswain and Mat-

thews went forward for a smoke, and I relieved Johnson at the wheel whilst he went to the cabin to get his supper.

The sun was still above the horizon and the sky cloudy ; there was a *set* look about the weather that bothered me. As a rule, the prevailing winds in this ocean are westerly, and these were the winds I wanted, and had good reason to hope for ; but here was the wind dead east, and breezing up in puffs as the sun declined, and the brig was heading right out for the middle of the Pacific. And yet she was sailing too. If you have ever seen a deeply laden barge beating up a river against a stiff breeze and the ebb-tide, you will be able to form some idea of the manner in which this water-logged hull sailed ; there was not an atom of *lift* in her : she swooshed through it like a log of pitch-pine sawn off square. The wind had raised a little sea, though nothing to speak of, and the waves travelled along our bulwarks just as they would against the side of a pier. Her sails were round and hard as the side of an apple, and the boatswain, with his tobacco-pipe sticking

out of his cheek, went about trying the stays with his hands, testing the jib and topsail halliards, and looking about him critically for weak points; whilst Matthews peered on his hands and knees down the forescuttle, or went and squinted over the bows, and ferreted about in all directions like a dog that had lost its reckonings, and was too troubled in its mind to lie down and keep still.

But it was delightful to me to look up and behold the sails full, and hear the tumble of water slipping past; to see those men forward and Nelly sitting by my side. I thought of my loneliness this time yesterday, and of the fire-raft, and how I had laid me down, scarcely daring to hope that I should ever be permitted to see Nelly again; and then I thought of her sufferings at that very time, and my heart swelled with thankfulness to reflect that we were together, and that this very brig, which I had cursed in my passion as the cause of my misfortunes, had been my sweetheart's salvation, and rescued her from that worst horror of shipwreck—starvation in an open boat.

Some such thoughts as these were in her mind too, I knew, from the expression in her soft eyes when our glance met; but our memory was too keen, our sufferings—and hers especially—too recent, to enable us to endure, for the present at least, further reference to the past.

After we had remained for some time silent she said, “Will, I wish you would show me how to steer. I used to watch the men on the *Waldershare*, and believe I could manage; one lesson from you would make me perfect. A time may come when all of you will be wanted to attend to the sails, and it would be very useful if I could steer.”

“My darling, there is nothing easier. Come and stand here. Lay hold of these spokes now. First of all, always remember to stand on the weather side of the wheel—the side on which the wind is blowing.”

“Yes, I know that.”

“The wheel reverses the action of the tiller. If you were steering with a tiller, and I should call out ‘Hard a starboard,’ you would put the tiller over to the right-

hand side, and that would make the vessel's head fall off on the port or left-hand side. But to obey that order with the wheel you would have to turn it from left to right,—so; because, if you will look at the rudder-head, you will see the tiller is fitted the reverse way to the tiller that is used in steering without a wheel, and the action of the wheel revolves the chains, which drag the tiller the way you want it to go."

"I see. Then, if you were to cry out 'Hard a port,' I should have to put the wheel over to starboard?"

"Right, my sweet little blue-jacket! Now look at that black mark in the compass there; that is called the lubber's point. It is in a direct line with the brig's head, so that in whatever direction the vessel is going, that mark turns with her. Suppose I tell you that the brig's course is north-west, then, to keep her to that course, you must get those letters on the card to swing true to the mark. If the vessel rolls or pitches, the card will swing from side to side; and it is the business of the helmsman to see that those letters don't swing

further on one side of that mark than on the other. That is, you must make that mark strike the mean—the centre, so to say—of the swing of those letters. Do you understand?”

“Perfectly.”

“Therefore, in steering, all that you have to do is to take care that the course, be it north-west or south-east, or whatever else it may be, swings true to the mark. If the wind won't let it swing true, then the yards must be trimmed. If by trimming the yards you cannot get the course to come true to that mark, then there is no help for it—the wind is foul; the ship must fall off, though kept as close as she will lie. However, that is the business of the officer of the watch, and has nothing to do with you as helmsman. Whichever way the course swings, you have only to turn the wheel the reverse way to the swing of the card, to bring the course back.

I gave her an illustration by revolving the wheel a trifle, and then told her to experiment for herself. She might, indeed, sweet girl, have had a lighter vessel to learn

her steering lesson in; yet this sunken hull gave her the ideas she needed. I saw her knitting her fair brows as she thought out the not very intricate problem, moving the wheel cautiously the while. Presently she surrendered the spokes to me, with a smile full of childlike pleasure and vanity.

"I know all about it now, Will," said she; "and, by being able to steer, I shall be as good as a fifth man to you, shan't I, dear? And give me a chance of proving my boast when you can, for I want my sailor to be proud of his sweetheart, and to be able to say great things of her when we get back."

She checked her laugh and drew a sudden breath, as she looked round and whispered, "If we ever do get back, Will!"

"Never doubt it, Nell!" I exclaimed, cheerfully. "Do not you believe in the little cherub that sits up aloft, and watches over poor Jack and his sweetheart too, Nell? Have no fear, my precious! Every hour of this sailing increases our chance of rescue; and, if I had not confidence in all being well with us presently, and after a

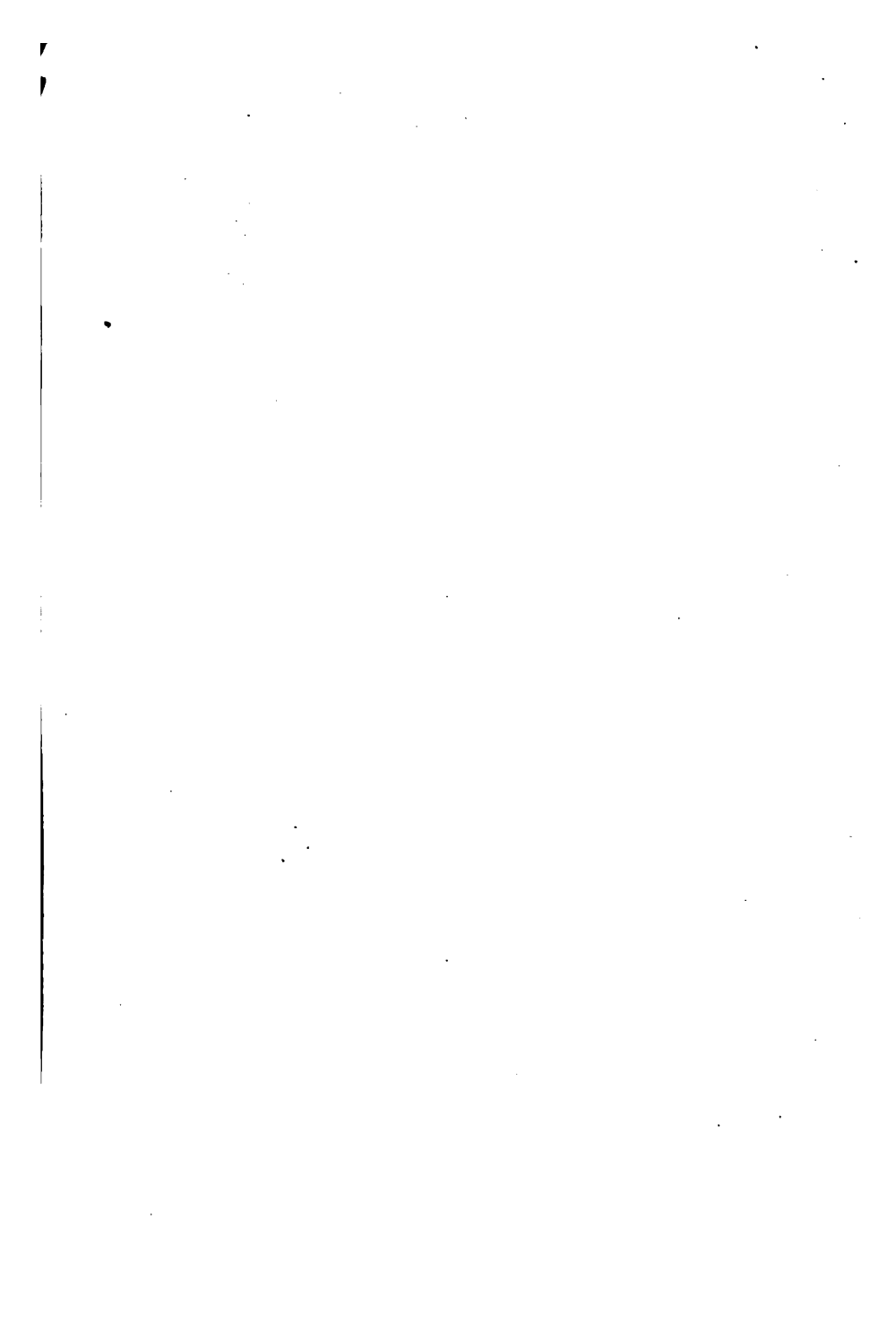
little longer trial of our patience and our hope, I would not say what I feel in my heart,—that would to God I could be sure that my brave little shipmate Thomas, and the rest of the people of the poor old *Waldershare*, were as safe as we five are.”

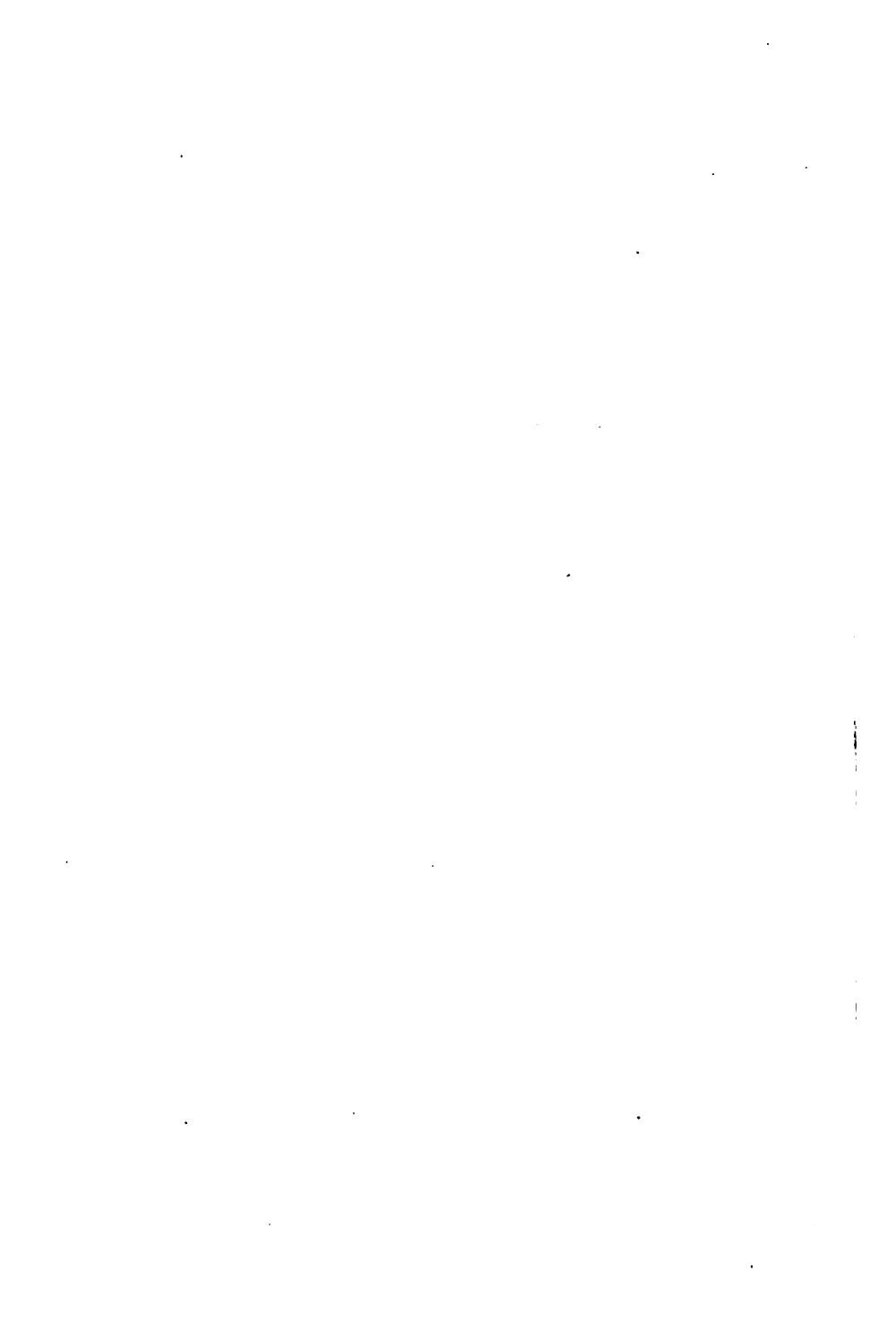
She was interrupted in some answer she was about to make, by Johnson coming to take the wheel.

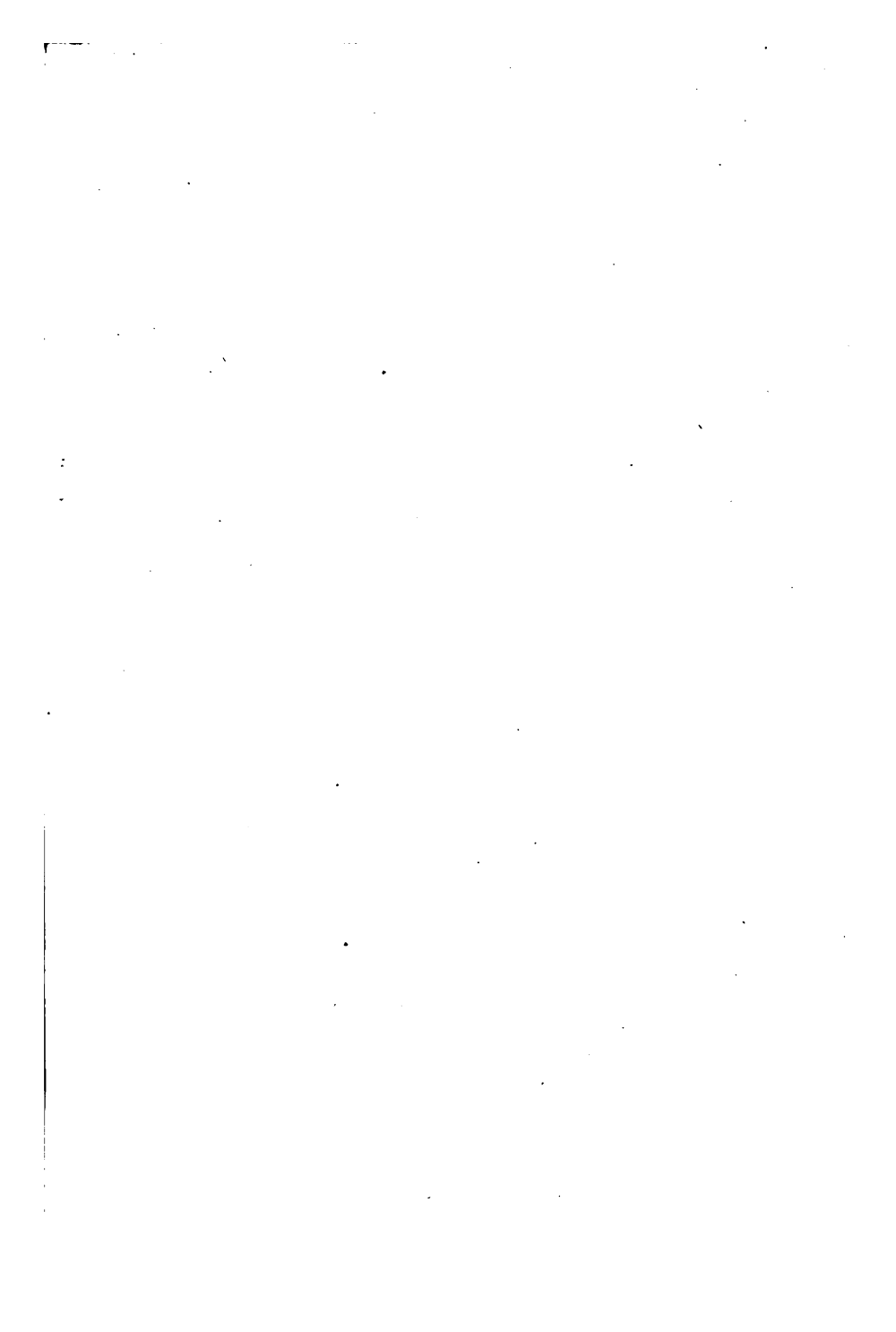
By this time the sun had gone, but the glory of his setting was still making a noble show of the western sky, towards which the clouds were hurrying out of the east, sailing up with brows of amber over a heaven of dark soft blue.

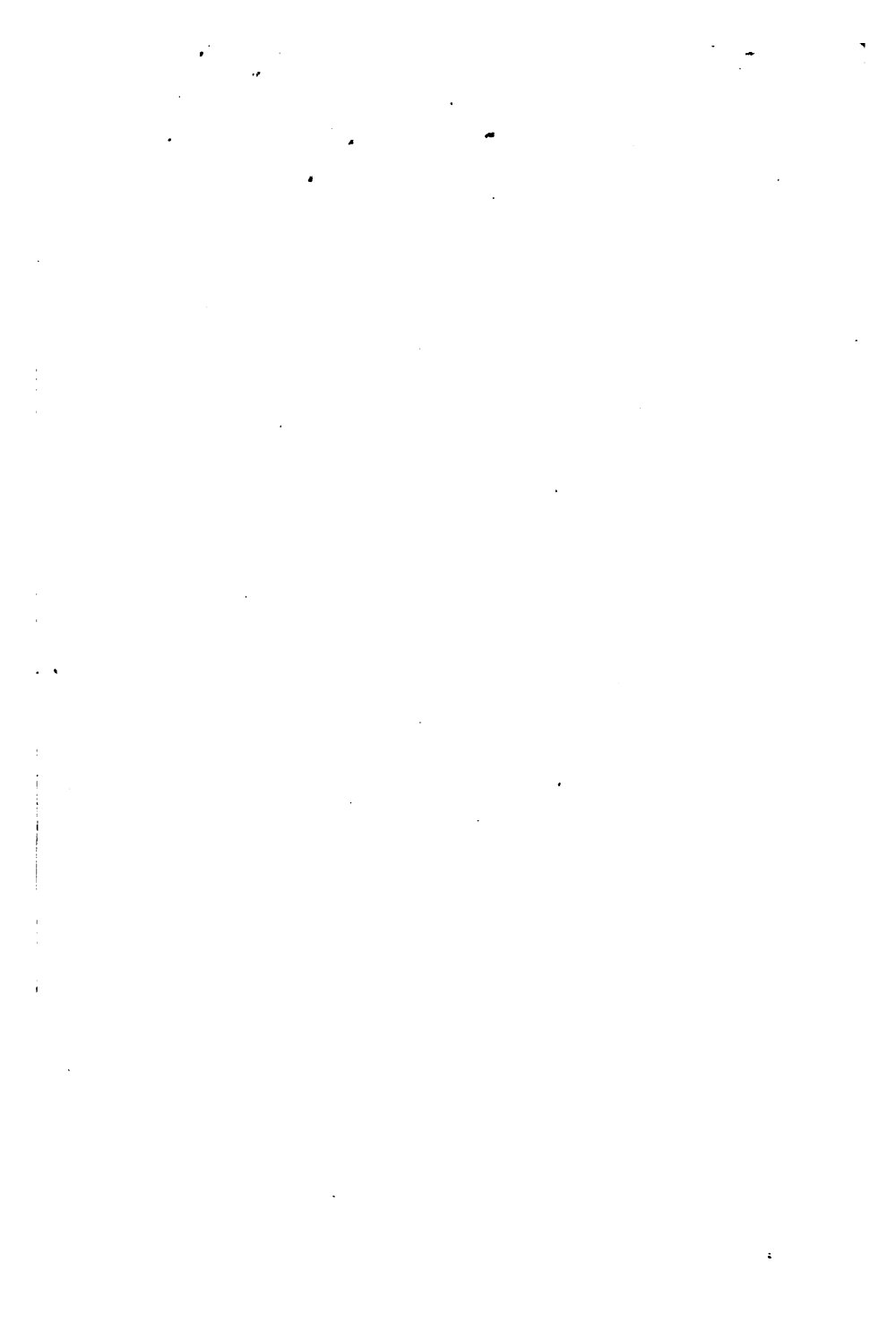
“I watched his setting last night, Nelly,” I whispered, as we stood together looking towards the west. “A wonderful and a happy change has befallen us since then; and let us pray that when he sets again, he may leave us happier and more grateful still.”

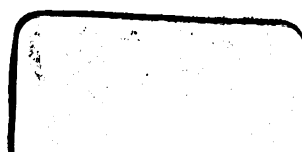
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